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Mobile phone filmmaking as a participatory medium: The case study of *24 Frames 24 Hours*

A Master's Thesis for the Degree Master of Arts (Two Years) in Visual Culture

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Abstract

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This research paper explores the recently evolving field of mobile filmmaking as a medium with a potential to increase participation of individuals and communities in their environment. Through the case study of the global mobile filmmaking project *24 Frames 24 Hours*, the thesis answers two main questions: how can mobile filmmaking as a process (i.e. the process of creating short films) be used as a participatory and creative medium?, and how can visual products of mobile filmmaking and the way they are presented increase audience participation? The analysis was done through the local and global aspects of the production and distribution of mobile filmmaking, as well as by placing mobile filmmaking within the discourse of cinema history and new media. Due to its accessibility to anyone in terms of price and skills, mobile filmmaking increases one's participation in his/her physical and social environment and can become an alternative to the mainstream media. In terms of audience participation, the research shows that mobile filmmaking as such does not offer anything so new if compared with examples from the cinema history. What is new about mobile filmmaking is the way it is presented, which in the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours* is a database-like structure, allowing the viewer to create new collages and new narratives out of the uploaded videos. However, how much audience can interact with the content and participate in the community depends largely on the extent of the website's interactivity, which is determined by the interface but also by the actual designer of the website.

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Keywords:

Mobile filmmaking
Participation
Creativity
Interactivity
Audience participation

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Introduction

The steps of Strasbourg Cathedral in the early morning, cars rolling backwards in the light of New Zealand's night, crossing a river in a Malaysian metropolis in the early evening – these are a few examples of shots taken during a project called *24 Frames 24 Hours*, creating an original and constantly developing digital object that the organizers of the project call “a dynamically-generated international collaborative mobile-documentary”.¹ *24 Frames 24 Hours* is an international project engaging with local communities through mobile phone filmmaking (hereinafter referred to as mobile filmmaking) and resulting in an online, interactive platform where all the individual videos can be combined into various collages.

I first came across the project when I was planning my own set of workshops focused on empowering people through creating short films using only smartphones and laptops, i.e. objects in everyday use. Being a volunteer both in a student innovation centre and in an organization focused on social inclusion of youngsters with various cultural backgrounds, I felt the need to combine the creative potential of these young people with the ubiquity of smartphones in the life of their generation. I wanted to give individuals as well as groups a tool for expressing themselves and telling their stories, which are often very important for the world to hear, but which frequently stay forgotten, as they may be hard to express verbally.

When preparing for my own project and learning more about the background of mobile filmmaking, I found numerous sources by the author Max Schleser. During my further research, it turned out that Schleser was a major figure and scholar in this field. He was one of the first filmmakers to create a feature film only with a mobile phone; completed his PhD at the University of Westminster with a dissertation called *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*; and was a founder of MINA (Mobile Innovation Aotearoa) in New Zealand, which organizes workshops, festivals, screenings and symposiums on the subject of mobile filmmaking. Among the projects that Schleser organized and launched, the one that caught my attention was *24 Frames 24 Hours*, particularly because of its local and global dimension in engaging people in the process of creating their video, as well its collective element that Schleser called “global city film”.² Getting in contact with Schleser himself, I was able to collect additional information about the idea and the project itself. Since my interest in mobile filmmaking lies in its potential to increase individual as well as collective participation in the world, I decided to choose this project as a case study for my thesis, focusing on non-professional mobile filmmaking as a participatory medium.

¹ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/> (accessed 11 March 2014).

² M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 1 April 2014).

Brief introduction to mobile phone culture

The mobile phone has come a long way since it was marketed commercially for the first time. As Gerard Goggin observes, the mobile phone “has become much more than a device for voice calls – it has become a central cultural technology in its own right”, being associated more with a person than with a household.³ Such gadgets have become an omnipresent object, a tool of everyday life. This development is also related to the convergence of the mobile phone with other media such as personal organizers, digital cameras, mp3 players, television, radio, and newspapers. This has resulted in numerous changes in our every-day activities, including: being constantly accessible; extending working hours; texting instead of calling and the associated changes in language usage; watching videos away from our home screens; surfing the Internet during free moments; and reading news in an electronic form. Nevertheless, according to Steve Woolgar, the nature and etiquette of mobile phone usage depends crucially on local social context, for example texting someone while having a face-to-face conversation might be acceptable in Sweden but not in France. Woolgar also adds that the more global mobile technology becomes, the more local aspects come to the surface.⁴ For example, by juxtaposing online the same video formats from different parts of the world, one might assume that the local specificities of the filmed places would stand out even more than when screened individually. This assumption will be questioned later on in this paper by examining the local-global dynamic of mobile filmmaking.

As the main topic of this research paper is mobile filmmaking, the focus will be on the fusion of camera and mobile phones. Due to the ubiquity of mobile phones, as mentioned above, visual material produced by camera phones differs from material created by ordinary digital cameras. Digital (and analogue) cameras have traditionally been used by mass consumers mainly at special occasions such as holidays, travel, family gatherings and weddings, whereas camera phones, carried constantly around by their users, have the potential of capturing spontaneous reality, unexpected moments and the ‘everyday’.⁵ At this point, it is worth noting that the first filming tools accessible to the wider public did not emerge with the digital format but existed long time before; the 8 mm film format was developed by Kodak during the early thirties as a cheaper alternative to the 16 mm film to create a home movie format.⁶ However, use of cameras

³ G. Goggin, *Cell phone culture: mobile technology in everyday life*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 2.

⁴ S. Woolgar, ‘Mobile back to front: uncertainty and danger in the theory – technology relation’, in R. Ling and P.E. Pederson (eds.), *Mobile Communications: Re-negotiation of the Social Sphere*, London, Springer, 2005, pp. 39 – 40.

⁵ O. Daisuke and M. Ito, ‘Camera phones changing the definition of picture-worthy’, *Japan Media Review*, 29 August 2003, <http://www.douri.sh/classes/ics234cw04/ito3.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2014).

⁶ ‘Super 8 mm Film History’, *Kodak Cinema and Television*, http://motion.kodak.com/motion/Products/Production/Spotlight_on_Super_8/Super_8mm_History/index.htm (accessed 6 May 2014).

with such films still demanded technical skills, mainly in order to ‘develop’ the film. Moreover, the distribution of such home movies to friends and relatives was still complicated and time consuming, requiring either gatherings of people to watch them together, or physical distribution of the film.

Current camera phones have a lot of advantages that distinguish them from the previously existing filming devices: they are omnipresent, allowing users to film spontaneously and unexpectedly; they are a combination of several types of media; and they offer access to the Internet, thanks to which such ‘visual everyday’ can be easily shared directly from the mobile phone with a local as well as global community. These are exactly the features that distinguish mobile filmmaking from traditional filmmaking – it is highly accessible to anyone in terms of the price of production/distribution and the skills needed to operate it, and also the ways of direct distribution and sharing are broader than within conventional filmmaking.

The purpose of the research and research question

The purpose of this research is to explore the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project from two main perspectives:

- i. How has this project utilized mobile filmmaking as a participatory and creative medium through the production of short mobile films?
- ii. How has it increased the potential for audience engagement through virtual interaction?

Using the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project as a case study, this thesis also explores the wider question of how mobile filmmaking, as a new medium of communication, encourages creative engagement between the mobile filmmaker and its audience. This will be analyzed in terms of the local and global aspects of its production and distribution as well as the omnipresent, largely accessible and discrete nature of the mobile camera phone as a tool that allows one to be constantly connected with the world.

The relevance of the research lies in its contemporary relevance or ‘up-to-dateness’ and in the large potential mobile filmmaking can have as an empowering tool for individuals, groups of individuals and communities. Moreover, mobile filmmaking is a field that has been explored only sporadically and only from the perspective of its aesthetic role or its journalistic use. The leading (and indeed practically the only) scholar on mobile filmmaking is Max Schleser, whose work has since been cited by other authors. Therefore, the lack of alternative sources and contrasting perspectives is problematic when seeking to evaluate Schleser’s arguments. In particular, his positioning of mobile filmmaking predominantly within documentary filmmaking might influence other researchers to share this approach. Even though Schleser’s research is extensive and has

been continuing since the appearance of video format in mobile phones, it follows only one path and builds predominantly on his theory. Therefore, this thesis is relevant in that it aims to fill the gap within the field of mobile filmmaking literature, bringing forward and combining different theories and exploring the potential of amateur mobile filmmaking as a participatory medium.

It is very important to note, however, that because mobile filmmaking is a very quickly developing and changing field, due to the changes and innovation in technology and the way people use it, this research paper offers a ‘snapshot’ or testimony of this particular topic at a particular time in its development.

Theoretical framework

Since mobile filmmaking is explored as a participatory medium in this thesis, the concept of participation serves as the main theoretical frame. As discussed later in Chapter two, participation is a very broad term and has been theorized within the field of for example politics, media, development studies, and economics. For the purpose of my research, I have decided to use Jackie Shaw’s and Clive Robertson’s concept of participation, outlined in their book *Participatory Video, a comprehensive guide to using video in group development work* as a theoretical framework.⁷ One reason for doing so is that these two scholars are filmmakers who have developed their theory from practice and both specialise on the use of participatory video in community development. This corresponds with the stated aim of Max Schleser for the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project: to empower the participants through representing their communities and themselves in short videos.⁸ Even though their concept originates from the nineties and is based on the use of techniques other than mobile filmmaking and within the field of development, their arguments appear highly relevant even in the present context.

Part of the thesis also questions the ability of mobile filmmaking to encourage creativity, and how creativity is connected to participation. This topic is discussed mainly in relation to two concepts: first the concept of ‘prod-user’, developed and popularized by Axel Bruns,⁹ and second the concept of creativity presented by David Gauntlett in his book *Making is Connecting, The social meaning of creativity, from DiY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*.¹⁰ While Bruns discusses creativity and content creation exclusively in the world of the World Wide Web, Gauntlett broadens the

⁷ J. Shaw and C. Robertson, *Participatory Video, a comprehensive guide to using video in group development work*, London, Routledge, 1997.

⁸ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz> (accessed 11 March 2014).

⁹ A. Bruns, ‘The Future Is User-Led: The Path towards Widespread Producers’, *Fibreculture Journal*, Fibreculture Publications, Perth, WA, no. 11, 2008, <http://eleven.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-066-the-future-is-user-led-the-path-towards-widespread-producers/>, (accessed 22 May 2014).

¹⁰ D. Gauntlett, *Making is Connecting, The social meaning of creativity, from DiY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*, Cambridge, Polity, 2011.

spectrum of activities where one can be creative outside of the virtual world, and stresses the social side of creativity. He argues that creating something brings people together and this then increases their engagement in the surrounding world.

The thesis also situates the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* within the discourse of the so-called “new media objects”, using the definition and theory of Lev Manovich, one of the leading scholars in this field.¹¹ Interactivity as one of the essential aspects of new media, which can enable audience participation, plays an important role in the discussion of the case study in the third chapter. Interactivity, similar to participation, is a very broad term which can be understood in various ways. I have therefore chosen to use three main theories: Henry Jenkins’ concept, which situates interactivity only within the field of technology and sees it rather as a limiting characteristic of the ‘converged media’,¹² John B. Thompson’s concept, which perceives interactivity as a broad term for social interactions among humans,¹³ and Jens F. Jensen’s narrower definition of interactivity as a characteristic or extent of a medium in general, allowing the user influence the medium’s content.¹⁴ Participation, creativity and interactivity are thus the three main themes discussed in relation to the case study analysis.

Method

This research is using case study as the main qualitative research method. The advantage of the case study method is its detailed contextual analysis, which helps to support an already existing knowledge or claim, but can also bring new findings when, according to the researcher Robert K. Yin, a contemporary phenomenon is put into its real-life context – the ‘case’.¹⁵ The method consisted of several steps: defining the research question, finding the particular case study, data gathering and their evaluation and analysis.

Defining the research question was determined by my own interest, where I wanted to join two fields – creative processes and empowerment. Regarding the case study, I came across it from my own interest while doing a research on participatory video and chose it because of its character which combines a lot of aspects – amateur filmmaking, local and global aspects, new means of communication and presentation. I then started to gather the empirical material which consisted of the individual videos created during the workshops, material from the social networks used by the participants of the project, and of the information gathered from literature.

¹¹ L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge, London, MIT Press, 2001.

¹² H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture, where new and old media collide*, New York, New York University Press, 2006.

¹³ J. B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of Media*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995.

¹⁴ J. F. Jensen, ‘Interactivity’: Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies’, *NORDICOM Review*, June, 1998, Vol. 19 Issue 1, pp. 185 - 204.

¹⁵ R. K. Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications, 1984, p. 23.

For more detailed information, I decided to contact directly Max Schleser with whom I conducted interview through e-mail conversation. I analysed the content of the visual images from several perspectives such as creativity, engagement with public space, and compared them with each other in terms of visual similarities of the environment they depicted. I also analysed the project's online platform as a unit, as a *product* of the project. I experimented with it in terms of functionality and interactivity. I also went through the Facebook conversations regarding the organization of the specific workshops, and explored the interconnections and meanings of using the other websites such as YouTube and Vimeo. Obtained information was then placed within the discourse of participatory media in the second chapter, and new media and the history of cinema in the third chapter. Choosing the discourse of participatory media was driven by the desired outcome to find out the position of mobile filmmaking within the current media regarding its potential to engage the users in their physical and social environment. Placing it within the discourse of new media and history of cinema aimed to find out in which way is mobile filmmaking and its distribution and consumption different from the conventional filmmaking.

Writing the paper, I had to keep in my mind that the characteristics of the studied medium is its variability and quick development, therefore the choice of the method of case study.

Review and state of current sources and literature

Literature and sources in general on mobile filmmaking are not extensive. The field has been explored from the aesthetical point of view by Max Schleser in his dissertation *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, where he coined several terms used by other authors since them, e.g. "Keitai Aesthetic" based on low resolution and pixel-divided image, or "Mobile-mentary" as a new term form mobile films documenting the 'everyday'.¹⁶ Another source dealing with the aesthetics of mobile filmmaking entitled *Aesthetics of Mobile Media* was also written by Schleser together with Camille Baker and Kasia Molga.¹⁷

The 'social' character of mobile filmmaking was described by Schleser in a chapter *Collaborative Mobile Phone Film Making* published in the *Handbook of Participatory Video*, which is almost the only piece of work analysing mobile filmmaking as a new branch of participatory

¹⁶ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011.

¹⁷ C. Baker, M. Schleser, & K. Molga, 'Aesthetics of Mobile Media', *Journal of Media Practice*, 10(2-3), June, 2009, pp. 101-122.

video.¹⁸ A more theoretical approach to mobile filmmaking as a participatory medium was adopted by Schleser in his paper *Mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) 2.0: The distinction between collaborative and co-creation in documentary theory and practice*, which he presented at the Expanding Documentary Conference in New Zealand.¹⁹ Social implications of mobile technology in general are explored in the edited collection *Mobile Media Practices, Presence and Politics, The Challenge of Being Seamlessly Mobile*, where the authors explore the impact of mobile communication from cultural, social, technological and historical perspectives.²⁰

Several publications on mobile phones and their relation to location and mobility have been published recently. For example an edited collection called *Mobile Technology and Place* includes theoretical as well as empirical findings regarding the interaction between place and the use of mobile technology.²¹

In the area of participatory video, the literature and sources available at the moment are focused mostly on the participatory aspect of video in general, mostly produced with analogue and digital cameras. An extensive and up-to-date collection is the *Handbook of Participatory Video* edited by E. Milne, C. Mitchell and N. De Lange, which critically approaches participatory video as a research methodology and explores its emancipatory character.²² Another publication which serves more as a ‘manual’ for practitioners who want to use participatory video as a method is Jackie Shaw’s and Clive Robertson’s publication entitled *Participatory Video: A Practical Approach to Using Video Creatively in Group Development Work*, which is very much oriented to the *process* rather than the *result* [*my emphasis*] of participatory video.²³ Another important source in this area is Shirley White’s *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower* which stresses the important role of video as a tool for empowering marginalized individuals and communities.²⁴ These sources position participatory video within the sphere of development and developmental work.

Structure of the thesis

In order to better understand the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* and its position within mobile filmmaking, the first chapter of the thesis briefly describes the development of mobile

¹⁸ M. Schleser, ‘Collaborative Mobile Phone Film Making’, in E. Milne, C. Mitchell, and N. de Lange (eds.), *Handbook of Participatory Video*, Pennsylvania, AltaMira Press, 2012, pp. 397 – 411.

¹⁹ M. Schleser, ‘Mobile-mentary (mobile documentary) 2.0: The distinction between collaborative and co-creation in documentary theory and practice’, in G. Peters (ed.), *Expanding Documentary Conference Proceedings – Ngā Wai o Horotiu Marae*, Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, 2011.

²⁰ K. M. Cumiskey and L. Hjorth (eds.), *Mobile Media Practices, Presence and Politics*, New York, Routledge, 2013.

²¹ G. Goggin and R. Wilken (eds.), *Mobile Technology and Place*, New York, Routledge, 2012.

²² E. Milne, C. Mitchell and N. De Lange (eds.), *Handbook of Participatory Video*, Pennsylvania, AltaMira Press, 2012.

²³ J. Shaw and C. Robertson, *Participatory Video: A Practical Approach to Using Video Creatively in Group Development Work*, London, Routledge Chapman and Hall, 1997.

²⁴ S. White (ed.), *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower*, New Delhi, Sage, 2003.

filmmaking since the beginning of camera phones and the introduction of video format to mobile media.

The second chapter of the thesis uses the example of *24 Frames 24 Hours* to explore the participatory aspect of mobile filmmaking as a creative process by studying the workshops and individual videos created by the participants. The aim of this part is to find out how and in which spheres mobile filmmaking can be used to encourage participation among the mobile phone users.

In the third chapter, the project's website <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> is analyzed from two angles – as a new media object, and as a continuation of cinema development – in order to find out its extent of interactivity and potential to actively engage audience in the content-creation.

The final concluding chapter then summarizes the findings derived from the research, and suggests idea for a further research within the area of mobile filmmaking.

Chapter One: *24 Frames 24 Hours* in the context of mobile filmmaking

Before looking closely at the subject of my study, *24 Frames 24 Hours*, this chapter focuses on the context of mobile filmmaking in general, its development since the introduction of camera phones and the video format. When talking about mobile filmmaking, I mean visual images produced *by* mobile phones, not *for* mobile phones, since there is an entire field of research focused on visual material produced for mobile phones. The following subchapter first gives a very brief technological history of camera phones, which is necessary to mention in order to understand the course of mobile filmmaking. It then discusses different genres and use of mobile filmmaking in order to explore the context in which the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* was launched.

1.1. Mobile filmmaking since the introduction of video format in camera phones

The start of the camera phones' era varies slightly according to different sources. Some of them mark the year 1999, when the Japanese company Kyocera introduced the 'Visual Phone' PHS VP-210 with an in-built camera, as the beginning of the camera-phone fusion.²⁵ While it allowed people to communicate through video calls, its handset was larger and heavier than other phones, which were the features that according to Tomoyuki Okada resulted in its rather negative reception.²⁶ Therefore, more authors agree that the first commercial camera phone widely accepted by the users is SH-04 model created again in Japan by Sharp in November 2000.²⁷ The in-built camera could only capture still images of 110 thousand pixels which very much limited their graphic quality.²⁸ However, whether we determine the year 1999 or 2000 as the beginning of camera and telephone convergence, the important moment in mobile phone technology development for our research is the year 2004 when mobile video format was introduced to users.²⁹ This year meant a real 'boom' in camera phone consumption, as two-thirds of all the mobile phones sold in the last third of that year had an in-built camera.³⁰ Since then, the quality of in-built cameras has been improving immensely, launching a 'megapixel-race' among different mobile phone producers, who were gradually improving the quality of lenses and image sensors and adding numerous attributes of a standard digital camera such as autofocus, zoom, and flash.

²⁵ T. Okada, 'The social reception and construction of mobile media In Japan', in M. Ito, D. Okabe, and M. Matsuda (eds.), *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2005, p. 56.

²⁶ Okada, 2005, p. 56.

²⁷ Goggin, 2006, p. 144.

²⁸ Hoi Wan, 'Evolution of the Cameraphone: From Sharp J-SH04 to Nokia 808 Pureview', *Sticky Smartphone* [web blog], 28 February 2012, <http://www.hoista.net/post/18437919296/evolution-of-the-cameraphone-from-sharp-j-sh04-to>, (accessed 23 January 2014).

²⁹ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 9.

³⁰ S. Hill, 'From J-Phone to Lumia 1020: A complete history of the camera phone', *Digital Trends*, 13 August 2013, <http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/camera-phone-history/#!yQ2N2> (accessed 7 March 2014).

Paradoxically, the continuous improvement of in-built cameras was slowed down by the introduction of smartphones, which were designed to satisfy the user in other important features than just the camera.³¹ Yet, such an industrial race for exploring new camera phone models would not have occurred if the users had not responded to such a feature positively and creatively.

As is argued in the next section, the character of the in-built cameras has influenced not only the graphic quality of the captured images but also the purposes for which these images are taken and what kind of mobile phone users take them. In such a context, it is also important to take note of two more factors influencing these variables: the Internet access from mobile phones and the introduction of Web 2.0 during the first decade of the 21st century which allowed users to share all kinds of information, including visual material.³²

1.1.1. Mobile video in its beginnings: an artistic tool

As mentioned above, the very beginning of mobile video is closely related to the low resolution format of the in-built cameras. If we look at some of the early mobile videos, the recorded image was highly pixelated and of low quality in terms of ‘informativeness’ and detail in comparison with images created by the digital cameras available at the time. Therefore, mobile video at its birth became a means of expression explored mainly by artists: “... the mobile video first appeared in the gallery, at art exhibitions and at film festivals before it surfaced in the mobile and entertainment industry,” claims Max Schleser.³³ He argues that art spaces and film festivals provided more freedom to explore the emerging mobile video format rather than the mainstream industry which sought to satisfy the consumer.³⁴ Artists began to explore the ‘imperfections’ of mobile videos, and used them as assets of their artworks. Steve Hawley’s video *Speech Marks* is considered to be one of the earliest examples of mobile film art.³⁵ Created directly after the introduction of mobile video format in 2004, it won numerous prizes at art and video festivals such as in Girona, Mexico City, San Francisco, Geneva and Clermont-Ferrand.³⁶ Shot entirely on Hawley’s mobile phone, the video creatively explores the challenges encountered while filming with the early camera phone: “the image is low quality and small in size, and there is a maximum

³¹ S. Hill, ‘From J-Phone to Lumia 1020: A complete history of the camera phone’, *Digital Trends*, 13 August 2013, <http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/camera-phone-history/#!yQ2N2> (accessed 7 March 2014).

³² Web 2.0 is a term popularized by Tim O’Reilly and stands for the World Wide Web sites which use a technology that is less static than the technology used by earlier websites. These new websites allow the users to interact with each other through a social media dialogue, to contribute to the content of the websites, and their characteristic is therefore more participatory. Examples of such Web 2.0 sites are blogs, social media networks, and Wikipedia.

³³ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 38.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 36.

³⁶ S. Hawley, ‘Speech Marks 2004’, http://www.stevéhawley.info/speech_marks.html (accessed 8 March 2014).

length of 9 seconds per shot (on my phone at least)".³⁷ However, Hawley acknowledged these limitations, and they became the very artistic tool for composing his artwork. The three-minute video edited digitally is a collage of small-square 'windows' showing fragments of the artist's everyday life. Hawley works actively with the time and size limitations of the individual shots, creating a dynamic by gradually adding the number of shots on the screen as the individual scenes get half-way through the entire video, and gradually decreasing them towards the end of the video again. As Hawley says, his video returns back to the origins of television in 1920s, when "low quality images were sent by phone lines" by the TV pioneer J. L. Baird, and similarly as these early jerky TV broadcasts, Hawley's *Speech Marks* "celebrate the everyday".³⁸

Such artistic experimentation with early mobile video is very similar to an art movement which emerged in the United States in the sixties, where an entire generation of artists with Nam June Paik in the lead aimed to challenge mainstream TV by experimenting with it. One such experiment was, for example, a creation of synthesizers with which the artists directly influenced the materials of the TV machine, changing the transmitted image into sets of colourful pixels. Their aim was to 'wake up' the passive TV audience of that time and to build a "Global Village through alternative uses of telecommunications".³⁹ This is particularly important for the subject of the case study of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, where the alternative use of the mobile phone as a filming medium can shift the users from consumers to producers – this topic will be discussed in the following chapter.

Returning to mobile filmmaking and mobile video art, similar to Steve Hawley, Max Schleser explores the low-resolution format in his film *Max with a Keitai* (2008) filmed on two mobile phones positioning the pixel at the core of his visual idea. Square as the shape of the pixel is a central element, visually repeating the image which is in the centre of the screen, resembling the circular ripples on water after a stone is thrown in it. Over several shots, the screen of the mobile phone is filmed and acknowledged with all its elements, showing the condition of the battery, network reception and menu icon. Schleser's intention is described in the form of an SMS text on the screen: "This experimental work aims at creating a visual language for small screen and mobile devices. A new form of mobile-mentary filmmaking."⁴⁰

³⁷ S. Hawley, 'Speech Marks 2004', http://www.stevhawley.info/speech_marks.html (accessed 8 March 2014).

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ E. Hugetz, 'Experimental Video', *Museum of Broadcast Communications Chicago*, <http://www.museum.tv/eotv/experimental.htm> (accessed 6 May 2014).

⁴⁰ *Max with a Keitai*, dir. Schleser, Max, UK, 2008, [online video], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jc2iLI5Mx0>, (accessed 9 March 2014).



Figure 1: Snapshot from *Max with a Keitai*, dir. Schleser, M., UK, 2008, showing the pixelated ‘Keitai aesthetic’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jc2iLI5Mx0> (accessed 22 May 2014).

Both Schleser and Hawley represent a trend within early mobile filmmaking that acknowledges the low-resolution format of 3gp mobile video format⁴¹, and instead of hiding it, they put it in the front, which creates new visual aesthetics. Schleser developed this concept in his work *Mobile-mentary: mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, where he coined the term ‘Keitai aesthetic’, resulting from the small size of the in-built cameras as well as the compressed format of the captured images.⁴² He took the term ‘keitai’ from Japanese, where it means ‘portable’, but it is commonly used for ‘mobile phones’. Schleser describes the Keitai Aesthetics as being expressed “on the visual level, through digital pixel compositions and fragmentations”.⁴³ He argues that what distinguishes such videos, is exactly their low resolution, rhythm and movement of the camera. It is important to add to Schleser’s argument that the pixels distinguish mobile video from the mainstream video’s aesthetics, not from the already mentioned experimental video movement in the United States.

The elements of Keitai Aesthetic, as coined by Schleser, are also observable in the work of Anders Weberg, Swedish filmmaker and artist exploring the potential of mobile video art and digital media in general.⁴⁴ Although working much more with the digital editing of his mobile videos, the rhythm, movement and shapes play important role in his films. If we look for

⁴¹ 3 gp video format is a compression format filming twelve frames per second and was used in the first generation of 3G (Third Generation) camera phones.

⁴² M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 123.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 122.

⁴⁴ A. Weberg, ‘Anders Weberg//Artist//Experimental Filmmaker’, <http://www.weberg.se/portfolio/about/> (accessed 9 March 2014).

example at his film *Surreal Scania* from 2006,⁴⁵ which seeks to find the commonalities between industrial areas and nature sites, it is similar to Hawley's and Schleser's videos in terms of the intention of capturing the impressions of places and moments. However, pixel is not a core element in Weberg's work. His videos cover the entire screen, and he takes the visual image made by mobile phone more as a canvas of patterns, using colour and light as visual tools. Moreover, as opposed to Schleser's argument that the "relationship between cinema and the city can be re-framed as a new interdependency between the mobile device and the city",⁴⁶ *Surreal Scania* also explores different places outside of city space, playing with nature elements and details, not limiting the mobile videos only to the sphere of urban environment.

1.1.2. Mobile video in journalism

As encountered already in the work of the artist Steve Hawley, one of the features of mobile video is its ability to capture the 'everyday'. Hence, the development and use of mobile videos within the field of journalism is not an accident. In the beginnings of mobile video, authentic images of low quality recorded by eyewitnesses started to be included in professional news coverage.⁴⁷ It is important to mention the use of mobile videos within journalism because they not only mirror the immediacy with which information can be shared, but such use has also pushed the mobile industry to focus on the development of camera phones.⁴⁸ Videos of Southeast Asian tsunami in 2004, the 2005 London transport bombings, documentation of Hurricane Katrina in the same year as well as the role of mobile videos and social networks during Arab Spring have shown what kind of socio-political impact mobile video made by eyewitnesses can have.⁴⁹ Besides having great societal importance and being a tool for activists,⁵⁰ mobile phones and their visual potential became an indispensable tool for journalists. Their use led one of the leading mobile producers Nokia in 2007 to cooperate with the press agency

⁴⁵ *Surreal Scania*, dir. A. Weberg, Sweden, 2006, <http://www.weberg.se/portfolio/2006/06/21/surreal-scania-2006/> (accessed 9 March 2014).

⁴⁶ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 47.

⁴⁷ D. Cameron, 'Mobile journalism: A snapshot of current research and practice', in A. Charles and G. Stewart (eds.), *The end of journalism: News in the twenty-first century*, London, Peter Lang, 2011, p. 4.

⁴⁸ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 37.

⁴⁹ See e.g. M.M. Hussain, M. Muzammil and P. N. Howard, *Democracy's Fourth Wave? Information Technologies and the Fuzzy Causes of the Arab Spring* (March 27, 2012), available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2029711> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2029711>.

⁵⁰ See T. Askanius, *Radical Online Video: YouTube, video activism and social movement media practices*, Lund University, 2012, 130 p.

Reuters in developing a toolkit for journalists on the move, and the whole concept of mobile journalism, so called ‘MoJo’, has been developed since.⁵¹

1.1.3. Nokia Shorts and recognition of mobile video format

The examples of mobile filmmaking mentioned above are independent productions created mostly for alternative spaces outside of the mainstream industry. Even though it was not until 2009 that “the mobile industry began to recognise the mobile video format for filmmaking”,⁵² some of the mobile producers supported, if not even encouraged mobile phone users to use their phones creatively in terms of video production. Nokia was the first one of them. It started to cooperate with the Raindance Film Festival and British Independent Film Awards in Great Britain in 2003, creating Nokia Shorts competition. The participants were asked to submit fifteen-second long videos recorded by standard digital video equipment. At the occasion of the competition, Alison Brolls, head of marketing for Nokia Mobile Phones UK said: “The introduction of video recording and playback facilities on mobile phones such as the Nokia 3650 is one of the most exciting developments in the mobile phone industry at present,” and he added that he hoped the collaboration would encourage the link between mobile phones and film.⁵³

Since then, Nokia has been organizing Nokia Shorts every year, and the study of the competition would provide a deeper insight into the development of mobile video (at least within Nokia devices). However, due to the lack of the space within this thesis, only few examples can be mentioned. The first two years of the competition were focused on the films *for* mobile phones; therefore the first year to actually promote the mobile-made video was 2005, where the submitted 15-second videos had to be shot entirely on mobile phone with video-recording capabilities.⁵⁴ The year 2006 still shows the low resolution format of the mobile videos and small-sized images. Two of the finalist videos (*Fate and Mr McKinley* and *A Good Reason to wear Sunscreen*) returned to the early stages of cinema, when the stuttering image was black and white, correlating the visual experience of mobile images with the early silent films.

When we jump forward to the year 2011, Nokia Shorts 2011 reflected the changes and progress in mobile phone technology and Web 2.0. The length of the submitted films was set

⁵¹ The topic of mobile journalism is very broad and would deserve a chapter on its own, for which there is not enough space in this thesis. For more information on mobile journalism, see D. Cameron, ‘Mobile journalism: A snapshot of current research and practice’, in A. Charles and G. Stewart (eds.), *The end of journalism: News in the twenty-first century*, London, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 63 – 71.

⁵² M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 38.

⁵³ ‘Lights, Camera, Action – Introducing the Nokia Shorts’, [online press release], <http://www.bifa.org.uk/releases/2003-nokia-announces-collaboration-with-british-independent-film-awards-and-raindance-film-festival> (accessed 9 March 2014).

⁵⁴ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 180.

between ninety seconds and eight minutes,⁵⁵ which was allowed by the possibility to record longer shots than just a few seconds, and it had to be shot in high definition, again allowed by the introduction of HD output video format. Moreover, Nokia partnered with the online video-sharing platform Vimeo founded in 2004, which enjoyed a boom after the introduction of Internet access in mobile phones. This partnership also showed the growing interconnection between mobile videos and social networks such as YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo, and Flickr. The winning film of the competition *Splitscreen: A Love Story* (James W Griffith, 2011) tells a story of two people from two different parts of the world falling in love and showing their journey to meet each other. The screen is divided into two halves, each of them depicting similar environment but at different places, creating a single landscape “folded” in the middle. This short movie shows the progress in-built mobile phone cameras have made since their beginnings, but also refers to the mobility mobile phone filmmakers can have. It is of importance to say that it came out in the same year as the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* was launched.

1.1.4. Not only shorts: Mobile feature films

One could think that due to its recording limitations, mobile filmmaking would be restricted only to the area of short film. It was still the case in 2005, when the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam (Idfa) screened the first short documentary film *Cell Stories* (Edward Lachman, 2004) entirely shot on a mobile phone, and sponsored by Motorola.⁵⁶ *Cell Stories*, also played on the ‘split of the screen’ (such as *Splitscreen: A Love Story* seven years later), but dividing it into six different segments, still mirroring the lower resolution and size of the video image at its early stage. The change in direction came one year later, when the first mobile feature film *New Love Meetings* (Marcello Mencarini & Barbara Seghezzi, 2006) was screened in MOMA (Museum of Modern Art in New York) and Idfa,⁵⁷ marking the beginning of a proliferation of mobile filmmaking into the feature film field. It was followed by another feature film *SMS Sugar Man* by South African director Aryan Kaganof (2006-2008). Both of these movies use the ‘disadvantages’ of mobile phone cameras to create an intimate atmosphere by using close-ups, which is of importance, if we consider one of the topics of both films being sex.

In the continuity of experimental mobile filmmaking, several feature films were shot on mobile phone such as *Nausea* (Matthew Noel-Tod, 2005), similar to Anders Weberg’s work in its ‘impressionism’, *Why didn’t anybody tell me it would become this bad in Afghanistan* (Cyrus Frisch, 2007), an extremely subjective psychological drama showing the streets of Amsterdam through the eyes

⁵⁵ H. H. Kurt, ‘Nokia Shorts 2011’, <http://kisaividir.net/nokia-shorts-2011/> (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁵⁶ IDFA, ‘Cell Stories’, <http://www.idfa.nl/industry/tags/project.aspx?id=38A560FC-D995-4194-976A-AE049D2FED3E> (accessed 10 March 2014)

⁵⁷ M. Mencarini, ‘New Love Meetings’, <http://www.marcellomencarini.net/page13.php> (accessed 10 March 2014).

of traumatized Dutch soldier returned from Afghanistan,⁵⁸ and *Immobilité* (Mark Amerika, 2008), described as a “foreign film” which was screened primarily in galleries and museums.⁵⁹ The director Mark Amerika said that the mobile phone images were “intentionally shot in an amateurish or DIY [do-it-yourself] style similar to the evolving forms of video distributed in social media environments such as YouTube.” By interconnecting “low-tech version of video making with more sophisticated forms of European art-house movies”, Amerika asks the question “What is the future of cinema?”⁶⁰

One of the answers to Amerika’s question in terms of mobile filmmaking was the film *Olive* (Hooman Khalili & Pat Gilles, 2011), which was fully shot on Nokia N8 but the mobile phone camera was hacked by the director in order to “get the technology to behave as he wanted”.⁶¹ This full length feature movie shows one direction of mobile filmmaking which heads towards the classical mainstream film industry visuals. An additional “35 mm lens adapter was fabricated to fit the smart phone in order to achieve a shallow depth of field”,⁶² aiming at getting the same visual quality and tools as by using professional digital camera. The difference though is that *Olive* was financed independently without the backing of any major studio,⁶³ which highlighted the possibilities of mobile video for amateur filmmaking.

1.1.5. Mobile film festivals and the birth of amateur mobile filmmaking

All the films mentioned above were mostly created by artists or experienced filmmakers and screened at film festivals reserved for professionals. Besides Sundance Film Festival and Idfa, several film festivals screening exclusively films shot on mobile phones were launched, such as the 4th Screen in USA in 2004, Pocket Film Festival in Paris between 2005 and 2010 followed by Festival Caméras Mobiles since 2011, Pocket Film Festival in Yokohama between 2007 and 2009 inspired by the French version but aiming at showing the films on small screens of the mobile phones,⁶⁴ International Mobile Innovation Screenings organized by Mobile Innovation Network Aotearoa (MINA) in New Zealand since 2011 until present, and the online iPhone Film Festival.

⁵⁸ Dccpr, ‘First fictional feature shot on mobile phone to premiere at IFFR’, *Creative planet network*, [web blog], 2 January 2007, http://www.creativeplanetnetwork.com/the_wire/2007/01/02/first-fictional-feature-shot-on-mobile-phone-to-premiere-at-iffir/ (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁵⁹ M. Amerika, ‘The first feature-length mobile phone art film’, <http://www.immobilite.com/film/> (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

⁶¹ H. Barnes, ‘Olive, first film to be shot entirely on Smartphone, heads to cinemas’, *The Guardian*, 2 December 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/dec/02/olive-film-shot-on-smartphone> (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁶² Cave Scribe, ‘About the movie’, <http://olivethemovie.com/> (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ J. Hart, ‘Celebrating the art of film-making on your phone’, *wired.co.uk*, 15 April 2009, <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2009-04/15/celebrating-the-art-of-film-making-on-your-phone> (accessed 10 March 2014).

One of the last festivals to be mentioned (and it is important to say that there are many more which have not been listed due to lack of space) is San Diego's International Mobile Film Festival. It is different and innovative compared to the previous ones because, similarly to the iPhone Film Festival, it is open to anyone not only to professionals but unlike the iPhone FF, the screenings are physically taking place, i.e. it is not only an online festival. Since 2010, the festival has promoted amateur mobile filmmaking: "Are You Chicken? or Are You Human? If you are human you qualify to enter your film free. Do it!"⁶⁵ San Diego's Festival is one of the first festivals to acknowledge the fact that camera phones allow anyone to become a filmmaker due to its filming potential, ubiquity, no costs to produce a film, and its simplicity to 'distribute' the film via social networks.

Max Schleser claims, that "while video art surfaced in the gallery context, mobile phone videos transcend the boundary of the galleries into a ubiquitous realm in the mediascape".⁶⁶ This is not completely true, since even the early video artists of the sixties and seventies expanded the field of experimentation with video outside of the art spaces. David Hall for example in his TV Interruptions from 1971 intervened the official TV broadcasting making the audience reflect on what they see and 'consume'. However, the area of production was still reserved primarily to the artists, as opposed to mobile filmmaking which allows every user of the mobile technology to be creative and innovative. This leads us to the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* which is outside of the mainstream industry as well as outside of the 'art space', claimed by the organizer to be exploring the amateur mobile video as a means of cultural expression, and aiming at empowering mobile phone users through shaping representations of themselves and their communities.⁶⁷

1.2. The project 24 Frames 24 Hours

"The *24 Frames 24 Hours* project engages with local communities around the world through mobile-filmmaking workshops," says the first explanatory text when one enters the project's website,⁶⁸ but how does it work in practice? *24 Frames 24 Hours* is an ongoing international collaborative project based on mobile-filmmaking that has been running since July 2011. It was launched by Max Schleser and organized in collaboration with Massey University in New Zealand, University of Paderborn in Germany and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa

⁶⁵ 'Rules & Details for MFF2015', *International Mobile Film Resource Center*, <http://mobilfilmfestival.com/mff-rules.html> (accessed 10 March 2014).

⁶⁶ M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 28.

⁶⁷ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz> (accessed 11 March 2014).

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

Tongarewa.⁶⁹ Several workshops exploring the potential of mobile phones as a filmmaking tool have been organized on a local level: “By creating short video clips, participants are empowered to shape representations about themselves and their communities,” says the description.⁷⁰ At the same time, the project takes advantage of online communication and the ‘interconnectedness’ of the contemporary world; therefore more than one hundred mobile-filmmakers of different ages, nationalities and backgrounds could have participated in the project, and the local aspect is then showed globally through online platforms and social networks such as Facebook, Vimeo, YouTube channel and the project’s homepage. Because of the project’s very organic development and different visuals at the social networks, the third chapter of this thesis will focus exclusively on the visual images produced at the project’s homepage <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#>, whereas the second chapter will explore the participatory aspect of the project using also Facebook and YouTube networks.

Since the workshops were held at different places in the world, time became a crucial element of the entire project: “As global collaboration is naturally related to the notion of time difference, *24 Frames 24 Hours* referenced this working parameter,” wrote Max Schleser.⁷¹ The participants were asked to create two minute videos representing an experience lived at their location during a specific two-hour time period of their own choice. In addition to that, the portrait filming format was chosen as a common criterion for mobile-filming so that several videos could be combined together into a ‘one-frame’ image afterwards. In the later stage of the workshops, participants were advised on editing, using the interval theory of Kino-Pravda coined by the Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov who is an important figure in the history of cinema and whose innovative filming techniques are still a source of inspiration for the current artists. The use of Vertov’s methods reflected Schleser’s theory that contemporary mobile documentaries have roots in the city film of the 1920s. Schleser claimed that “The city films of the 1920s capture the experience of the city and simultaneously provide a new film form and aesthetic. Mobile videos work on a similar level, expanding the notion of experience in relation to location on an immediate and intimate level.”⁷² Therefore, the project itself was naturally heavily influenced by Schleser’s own theories and perceptions of mobile aesthetic, which might have posed limits to participation and creativity for the project participants, an issue discussed more in the following chapter.

⁶⁹ M. Schleser, ‘Collaborative Mobile Phone Film Making’, in E. Milne, C. Mitchell, and N. de Lange (eds.), *Handbook of Participatory Video*, Pennsylvania, AltaMira Press, 2012, p. 400.

⁷⁰ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz> (accessed 11 March.2014).

⁷¹ Schleser, 2012, p. 401.

⁷² M. Schleser, *Mobile-mentary: Mobile documentaries in the mediascape*, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011, p. 125.

The next phase of the project was an interactive online platform, where all of the participants' videos are uploaded. Visitors are welcomed by a very short description of the project and by a tutorial on how to use the website. The audience can interact with the videos by combining different times, locations and themes together creating a set of collages unique to each visitor of the website. Every time a video is chosen, the right part of the screen shows a map with the exact place where the video was taken. However, a maximum of three or four different videos can be placed next to each other on a majority of laptop screens. When all the videos are screened at the same time, a three or four-striped image is playing at the same time creating an interesting viewing experience for the web-visitor.

Despite the fact that the organizers call the project an “international”, “collaborative”⁷³ and “global film”,⁷⁴ the geographical area covered so far involves predominantly the western world and the western culture, which is mirrored in the individual videos – an aspect analysed in the third chapter. Nevertheless, Max Schleser mentioned in our conversation that he would like to explore opportunities for future workshop collaboration in Latin America, Africa and Asia.⁷⁵ Besides that, his intention was to run the project even further on in the future in order to reach filmmakers in twenty-four cities around the world.⁷⁶ The following chapters will only focus on the period of time within which the workshops were held that resulted in the current stage of the project's website, i.e. between 2011 and 2013.

⁷³ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz> (accessed 11 March 2014).

⁷⁴ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 7 May 2014).

⁷⁵ M. Schleser, interviewed by Michaela Rábová, e-mail, 1 April 2014.

⁷⁶ Schleser, 2012, p. 401.

Chapter Two: *24 Frames 24 Hours* and the process of creating and connecting

The previous chapter has outlined the evolution of mobile filmmaking in relation to the technological development of mobile camera phones, which was driven not only scientifically and commercially, but also by users and their adoption and experimentation with the technology. This leads to the main topic of the thesis – participation and its aspects within mobile filmmaking: how does the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* use mobile filmmaking as a means to encourage people's participation? Such a question might appear quite unclear and even generate further questions: participation of whom? Does it mean participation in for example the project itself, the global community, or in public affairs? Therefore, this chapter focuses on the concept of participation and discusses it in the context of the project *24 Frames 24 Hours*. It approaches the project in its first stage, i.e. in the *process* of creating the visual material as opposed to the third chapter which focuses on the visual *product* of the project. It first discusses the term participation in broader context, which is then followed by closer analysis of the individual videos produced by the participants and the social networks used during the project and the workshops. It explores the actual creative process during the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project and its potential participatory elements on a local as well as a global level.

2.1. What is participation? Theoretical background

According to the Oxford Dictionary, participation is “the action of taking part in something,”⁷⁷ which still leaves a wide space for interpretation and use of the term. A narrower definition is offered by the filmmakers and researchers Jackie Shaw and Clive Robertson: “Participation implies an active engagement in the world: doing rather than observing. It involves joining with others to make decisions, to set objectives and to plan and take local action.”⁷⁸ Even though their definition is still quite vague in terms of *whom* is participating, it points to several important features of participation, especially the social and active dimension of such behaviour. To stress the individual elements of their understanding of participation, let me rephrase their definition, since it plays an important part in the following subchapters: participation comprises active interest in an individual's or a group's social as well as physical environment; it has a strong social element – to be able to participate in our environment, we connect with others whether on a local or a global scale, and we participate to accomplish certain goal – whether to e.g. decide, plan, create, act together or receive a feedback.

⁷⁷ Definition of participation, *Oxford Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, 2014, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/participation> (accessed 1 April 2014).

⁷⁸ Shaw and Robertson, 1997, p. 19.

What is particularly interesting in Shaw and Robertson's definition, especially in terms of *24 Frames 24 Hours* case study, is the 'doing rather than observing', which implies the active behaviour of an individual as a filmmaker, not just a spectator. Mobile filmmakers, by whom I mean anyone possessing a mobile device with an in-built camera and who uses this potential, are firstly inclined to observe, as are all other members of a society. However, they can also take direct action by filming and reporting spontaneously what is happening around them. Shaw and Robertson assert that when "used in a participatory way, video encourages people to examine the world around them, raising awareness of their situation and helping them to become more actively involved in the decisions that affect their lives."⁷⁹ Their statement positions video almost as an agent of participation, as if it was the video itself which makes people more engaged in their environment. I would rather argue that mobile video is a *tool*, a *medium* for participation. It can serve as a 'voice' for almost any individual or group simply because it is accessible to anyone in terms of price, ubiquity and size. However, it is important to repeat that mobile camera phones are only a *tool*, and if their feature was primarily to be a camera, mobile filmmaking as such would not encourage people's participation in the world. The reason for taking up the camera phone and engage with one's environment is the possibility to *share*, which has been enabled by the introduction of new digital media, social networks and more participatory character of Web 2.0, where users can participate in content creation. Therefore, I would note that camera phones can be a medium of direct participation for all individuals and group of individuals in local and global affairs if used as a filming and sharing device. Applying this argument towards the case study, one can say that, as a result of its educational character, the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* might make people aware of the tool they carry with them constantly, and therefore can potentially provide them with a means of direct participation in the world. The way it is achieved, is discussed later on in this paper.

2.1.1. The political dimensions of participation

Participation as a theoretical concept has been examined by numerous scholars in the context of political disengagement of citizens in contemporary democracies. One of the leading scholars in the area of media and participation, Peter Dahlgren, analyses the relations between the current problems of citizen's disengagement in democratic systems and new forms of participation that have emerged with the introduction of Web 2.0.⁸⁰ Dahlgren claims that people have lost trust in mainstream politics and media, as well as in the traditional means of political participation

⁷⁹ Shaw and Robertson, 1997, p. i.

⁸⁰ P. Dahlgren, *Media and political engagement: citizens, communication, and democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 1 – 246.

because of fundamental socio-cultural changes in democratic systems. These include economic insecurity, ecological threats, and a shift of real societal power to the private corporate sector in the mentioned media context.⁸¹ I would agree with Dahlgren in the sense that people's confidence in mainstream media such as TV, radio or newspaper has weakened, considering the concentration of media ownership by a small number of political as well as business groups. Mainstream media in general offer very little space for citizens to participate in content creation. Moreover, the amount of information appearing daily is overwhelming and grading the news in terms of credibility and importance has become extremely difficult, leading to people's resignation and shift of their interest towards social media. This is why mobile filmmaking, with its accessibility to every camera phone user, offers an alternative in this context to the aforementioned conglomerate character of mainstream media. Coupled with the direct Internet access, mobile filmmaking can be a medium through which people can let the authorities hear their 'voice' regarding for example politics, community decision-making, and physical public space, which is of particular interest for this paper.

In a broader meaning of the term, scholars Frederik Miegel and Tobias Olsson define public space as a "crucial aspect of a democratic society and a prosperous civic culture", because as they claim, it should provide a dialogue between citizens and power holders and create a sense of connection and involvement.⁸² In this thesis, I would like to discuss public space more narrowly as a physical public space, i.e. streets, parks, or schools, since most of the videos in *24 Frames 24 Hours* were filmed in such urban areas. The availability of public space and its openness has been doubted and claimed by citizens, numerous activists as well as street artists, who have realized that pressure on power-holders can be applied outside of traditional field of political participation.⁸³ Besides social and cultural movements, single issue activists, networks, transnational linkages, and/or NGOs listed by Peter Dahlgren as the agents for realizing non-party politics,⁸⁴ I would also add visual tools, such as amateur video, which play an important role in citizens' participation in the public space and in the process of decision-making. By filming one's story from an individual's point of view and sharing it with the community (whether local or global), citizens can find participation in different public issues meaningful, with a certain aim, because they believe that their mobile video is going to be 'heard'. This can compensate the feeling of powerlessness in regards to their environment. One can also see it as a form of protest:

⁸¹ Dahlgren, 2009, p. 12.

⁸² F. Miegel, and T. Olsson, 'Civic Passion: A Cultural Approach to the "Political"', in *Television & New Media*, January 2013, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 13.

⁸³ See for example D. Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, Guilford Press, 2003, or Luca M. Visconti, John F. Sherry Jr., Stefania Borghini, and Laurel Anderson, 'Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the "Public"', *Public Place, Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (October 2010), pp. 511-529.

⁸⁴ P. Dahlgren, *Young Citizens and New Media: Learning for Democratic Participation*, New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 6.

by creating my own short film or video, for example I am refusing to accept what is presented or ‘served’ to me by the mainstream media.

2.1.2. Participating through creating: the social element of participation

Another important aspect of participation is its social character which is closely connected to the concept of creativity. In his book *Making is Connecting, The social meaning of creativity, from DiY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*, David Gauntlett discusses creativity in its social dimensions. He refers to creativity as an ability that anyone possesses, and which is not reserved only to artists or scientists:

Everyday creativity refers to a process which brings together at least one active human mind, and the material or digital world, in the activity of making something which is novel in that context, and is a process which evokes a feeling of joy.⁸⁵

From Gauntlett’s reasoning, one can draw a link between creativity and participation, because creating something connects individuals who want to share fruits of their creativity in order to for example, learn, get feedback, show off or simply find people with the same interest. In the context of mobile filmmaking, I would argue that every mobile user making his or her film is creative in their own way. Even though one might copy a concept or a way of editing that has been done already, every mobile film will be an original, a unique object, because it is made by the particular filmmaker who used his/her own eyes, body and creativity to make such a film. It is exactly this accessibility of such a filming tool that might be a stimulus for one’s creativity. And such films are original not only in terms of their content, but also in the way they were produced, edited, and distributed, which again implies participation of individuals in group activities, debates and networks, which leads to the following point.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, participation implies a strong social element; people connect with each other with a certain aim, which in this case study is to create something together. To better understand the relationship between participation and creativity, I will again use Gauntlett’s argument on why creativity results into connecting in various ways:

- Making is connecting because you have to connect things together (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new;
- Making is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people;
- And making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 76.

⁸⁶ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 2.

His thesis shows that the act of creating something can be approached from three angles: from the physical one – putting things together, from the social one – gathering people together, and from the participatory one – making and sharing increases our interest in the local and global world. Gauntlett explains ‘making’ as a personally meaningful activity; the fact that such activity is personally meaningful is an essential motivation for people to participate in the sense of taking action and to connect with others.⁸⁷ I would clarify such a claim by stating that creative activity increases our personal engagement in a topic (whether it is e.g. the environment, our neighbourhood or technological development), which does not imply directly taking action, but is an essential precondition for active participation. This can be applied both to online as well as offline activities, such as e.g. jewellery making or creating a blog. In the case of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project, people connect offline on the local level in order to create a two-minute film together, and online on the global level in order to cooperate on a larger-scale, to watch together the fruits of their creativity and to create a collaborative film by merging the individual videos. By connecting around a creative activity such as mobile filmmaking, the participants of the project create local as well as global communities and get the chance to participate actively in their activities.

As has been mentioned above, the introduction of Web 2.0 together with the emergence of new media, a term discussed in the next chapter, has caused a major shift in communication from a “one-to-many” to a “many-to-many” structure.⁸⁸ The content ceased to be produced and edited only by the owners of websites, because even ordinary Internet users have gained access to content-creation. This led to the development of a term ‘produser’, popularized by Axel Bruns.⁸⁹ Bruns outlines four fundamental characteristics of ‘produsage’: i) it is community-based (by community he means a group of participants in a shared project), ii) the roles of individual ‘produsers’ are fluid (horizontal, non-hierarchical structure), iii) the products of ‘produsage’ are unfinished artefacts, and always open for development, iv) the products are common property and function as open source.⁹⁰ Bruns’ characteristics of ‘produsage’ define an ideal stage of media where everyone can participate and contribute by their own content. However, one could doubt whether the current Web 2.0 is non-hierarchical and an open source, if we look for example at Facebook which can manipulate with as well as process users’ content.⁹¹ This argument will be

⁸⁷ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 114.

⁸⁸ N. Carpentier, *Media and participation*, Bristol, Intellect, 2011, p. 111. Available from: E-Book Library (accessed 2 April 2014).

⁸⁹ A. Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*, New York, Peter Lang, 2008, 418 p.

⁹⁰ A. Bruns, ‘The Future Is User-Led: The Path towards Widespread Produsage’, *Fibreculture Journal*, Fibreculture Publications, Perth, WA, no. 11, 2008, p. 1, <http://eleven.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-066-the-future-is-user-led-the-path-towards-widespread-produsage/> (accessed 22 May 2014).

⁹¹ See for example the second point of Facebook’s *Statement of Rights and Responsibilities* at <https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms> (accessed 18 May 2014).

discussed later on in the next chapter. Nevertheless, the more participatory environment of Web 2.0 can provide an alternative to the world of unbalanced power-relations, as mentioned and examined by Peter Dahlgren. Theoretically, anyone can become a producer of his or her content to be shared, which increases people's interest in different issues since they feel that their 'voice' matters. And we naturally produce something because we want to be appreciated, criticised or just simply to know other's opinions. The concept of 'produser' thus points to the fertile environment of the World Wide Web for participation on a local as well as a global level. It also reveals the aspect of creativity which is encouraged in the user by the possibilities of new media.

To summarize the discussion above, I would conclude that in the case study of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, participation means an active involvement of the project's participants as well as the audience of the 'final film' in their local as well as global community around the project but also around their physical and social environment. Since mobile filmmaking is a creative activity, participation also implies the active and creative engagement of users with the device. And since the short films were mostly filmed in the urban environment, the participants had to actively engage with their environments including public space, which is an important medium for citizens' participation. These three main aspects will be further described and illustrated in the following subchapters by using examples of the individual videos produced during the workshops as well as discussions of the participants in the social networks.

2.2. The participant and public space

"How do you explore your local surroundings through the lens of a mobile phone and show the world people and places that are important to you," asks the description under the finalised collage video of the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* published on YouTube.⁹² It documents one of the possible areas where mobile filmmaking can be used to encourage people's participation – participation in the public space, which mobile phone users encounter daily but do not necessarily explore visually. A number of the individual videos were shot mainly in public places within the urban environment with the exception of New Zealand, where the majority of videos were shot in nature settings. This feature of the project is quite important because it makes the participants 're-discover' public spaces and 're-build' their identities within that environment. I use the words 're-discover' and 're-build' consciously, because it has been pointed out by numerous activists (e.g. Reclaim the Streets), artists (e.g. Ztohoven in Czech Republic and their project Subconscious Raped), scholars (Don Mitchell, Michaela Sorkin) and movements (e.g.

⁹² M. Schleser, '#24F24H', [online video], 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAePH00DeTk> (accessed 11 April 2014).

Manifesto Club in UK), that public space has lost its availability to everyone and has become more and more controlled by authorities and private interest groups. Editor and architect Catherine Slessor remarked that the character of public space is no more formed by how people choose to use it: “it’s a film set, up close and personal, with battalions of CCTV cameras documenting every waking and walking move we make.”⁹³ The unavailability of public space to all citizens has become a particularly heated topic of the debate in Great Britain, where an Anti-Social, Crime and Policing Bill has just passed through the parliament, expanding “powers for state authorities to control who can do what in public space - to such a degree that councils and the police will have an almost free hand to determine the use of urban spaces,” writes the activist Josie Appleton, adding that busking or protesting will most probably annoy someone in a street.⁹⁴

Another example of a clash between the authorities’ point of view and the citizens’ point of view on what public space is, is the Occupy movement spreading from the US to all over the world or the protests in Istanbul in May 2013 against the plan to remove the Gezi Park, one of the last green parts of the European part of Istanbul,⁹⁵ both of them provoking a big political debate. One can argue that this is documenting a decline of one important segment of democracy – public space, which is leading to citizens’ disengagement with it. As has been mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, public space in general (physical and virtual as well as media space) should allow citizens to meet and interact and should be at their disposal, and the events mentioned above show the opposite. Catherine Slessor finishes her article by asking: “How can we rediscover the essential idea of public space and recast and reconnect with it at both the political and personal level?”⁹⁶ Mobile filmmaking can be one of the answers.

When one looks closely at the videos created during *24 Frames 24 Hours*, it is possible to see a personal connection with public space, in this case meaning the physical public space that the participants documented in their short films. Olivia Greco, for example, in her video called *Belmar* shows the destroyed places at the Belmar Beach in New Jersey after hurricane Sandy in October 2012. While filming ruins of restaurants and residential hotels, Olivia tells the audience about her personal connection to the place:

⁹³ Catherine Slessor, ‘Architectural Review’s Latest Issue: “Is This The End of Public Space?”’, *ArchDaily*, 16 March 2014, <http://www.archdaily.com/?p=486724> (accessed 12 April 2014).

⁹⁴ J. Appleton, ‘The end of public space’, *Architectural review*, January 15, 2014, <http://www.architectural-review.com/comment-and-opinion/the-end-of-public-space-one-law-to-ban-them-all/8657639.article> (accessed 22 May 2014).

⁹⁵ S. Pavey, ‘Courage Now Lies in the Grey’, *The Huffington Post*, [online blog], 30 July 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/safak-pavey/courage-now-lies-in-the-g_b_3678546.html (accessed 12 April 2014).

⁹⁶ Slessor, 2014.

I've worked in Mike's pizzeria in Belmar during the summer, right before the Sandy hit. This place recalls a lot of sentimental memories for me. I met a lot of people here and made this place my second home. [...] I felt like part of my childhood was gone.⁹⁷

In this video, Olivia tried to not only 'bring closer' the unknown place to the audience by telling her personal story, but also to pass on the legacy of the locals, who tried to reconstruct their common public place by showing the building sites and saying that "these people have contributed everything they can to restore the place they all call home".⁹⁸ When watching this video, one's relationship towards a public place can be resettled by seeing the joint efforts people have made to regain their common place regardless of whether it is private or public, because the 'public' eventually becomes 'private' by calling it 'home'.

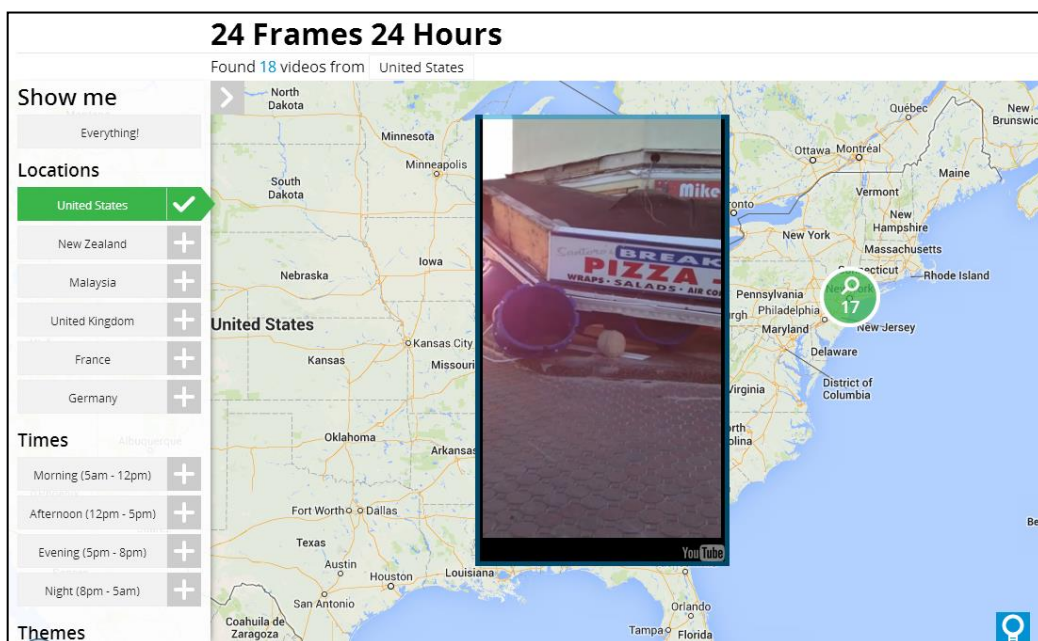


Figure 2: Snapshot from Belmar, dir. Olivia Greco, USA, 2012, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 22 May 2014)

Another example of 'appropriation' of public space by a participant of *24 Frames 24 Hours* can be Rick Nicholls's video documenting the city of Manchester through his eyes. Walking in the streets, Rick filmed the changing surface under his feet and interspersed these shots with city signs composing a phrase "Feel the love, pleasure, war, art".⁹⁹ Every single word gradually gains its meaning according to which image follows: "love" is followed by iron bars which turns it into irony, war is succeeded by an image of a killed black man in the street saying "In Loving Memory" followed by destroyed trodden bouquets on the pavement, which probably points out to the fleeting character of our memory, and "art" is documented by frescos on historical houses

⁹⁷ Belmar, dir. Olivia Greco, USA, 2012, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 12 April 2014).

⁹⁸ Belmar, dir. Olivia Greco, USA, 2012, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 12 April 2014).

⁹⁹ 24 Frames 24 Hours, dir. Rick Nicholls, UK, 2012, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 12 April 2014).

contrasted with contemporary graffiti, which resembles another kind of battle. The main message composed again from city signs and graffiti says “Give peace a chance. Here is scope for motion flowing forwards once more.”¹⁰⁰ The entire video finishes by showing the ‘greyness’ of the pavement again but this time interrupted by the yellow colour of a growing dandelion.

This video might be interpreted in many ways but the most striking one is the representation of the city of Manchester as a field of many battles, conflicts and grey zones (there are no people in the video besides the filmmaker). Rick Nicholls is not only revealing his relationship with the city, but again the relationship of the citizens to their common place, which in this case, is opposite to the previous video. He shows the tensions that exist within the public space and he incites the viewer to “give peace a chance”, to reconcile with the place and with its citizens.

A third example is a video from New Zealand called *Trippy Tree*, which shows another way of appropriating public space, this time directly allowed by the authorities.¹⁰¹ Set in the Botanic Gardens of Wellington, the filmmakers climb up an old tree whose branches are cut in a way that they serve like steps, and a circle is left out in the top so that people can actually get on the treetop. When up on the top, the filmmakers show the audience an unusual view over the city, giving extra attention to the moment when the viewer emerges from the tree verdure and spots the city from above. The 360 degree panorama view shows the audience not only the city but also the visitors of the botanical garden who rest in the treetop lying down, sunbathing and chatting. This video thus documents another angle of how a personal relationship to a public space can be restored. A general norm in botanic gardens or city parks is to not climb trees, sometimes to not even touch them, and yet many of us have experienced the desire to climb up and see the ‘world’ from above. The authorities of Wellington’s Botanic Gardens have allowed the visitors to realize this wish, and see their city from another perspective. Moreover, the mobile filmmakers added another dimension to it by showing how *they* see and use this place themselves, using the ‘fisheye’¹⁰² perspective. Thanks to them, this idea of making a public space attractive and meaningful to the citizens by the authorities themselves can be spread, from the borders of New Zealand, by way of the project’s platform.

Each of the videos within *24 Frames 24 Hours* shows some kind of relationship between the mobile filmmakers and their surroundings. By filming their social and physical environment,

¹⁰⁰ 24 Frames 24 Hours, dir. Rick Nicholls, UK, 2012, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 12 April 2014).

¹⁰¹ *Trippy Tree*, dir. Spencer Buchanan and Elliott Graham, New Zealand, 2013, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 12 April 2014).

¹⁰² ‘Fisheye’ perspective is created by adding a special lens on the camera, which visually distort the image in order to show wide panoramic image. Currently, there are numerous mobile applications which create the same effect without adding any extra lenses.

the participants were able to share their connection and personal links to the various places, which is necessary in order to generate participation of other people within public space. One of the results of using mobile filmmaking can thus be that mobile phone users get engaged with their surroundings. This might lead them to observations and then action, which was for example the case of Olivia Greco, who went to explore the damages in the place of her summer holidays, and decided to take action in the form of making a short video about the efforts of local people to regenerate their common public spaces.

2.3. Engaging with the phone – provoking creativity

Watching the individual videos created by the participants of the workshops, one can argue that creativity constituted an important part of the project *24 Frames 24 Hours*. The description of the project at its YouTube channel “seeing the world through the lens of mobile devices” seems to put the mobile filmmakers into a rather passive role.¹⁰³ As demonstrated in the few following examples, the participants not only saw the world through their devices. They also explored their mobile phones in terms of their filming potential in order to show and share how they perceive the world, despite the fact that they were ‘limited’ by several criteria given to them by the project organizer. The following subchapter thus analyses the way participants explored creatively their mobile phones, and how their creativity was mirrored in the individual videos. Before analysing some of the examples of the individual videos, it is nevertheless important to discuss the extent of creative freedom the participants had during the workshops.

At the beginning of each workshop, several criteria, which might appear contradictory to the creative process, were given to the participants before the actual filming process: “The nice thing is if you use your mobile phone in a portrait format to allow us to link at least two video clips together. Videos should start and end with a time indication for around 10 seconds,” said Max Schleser in one of the Skype sessions for the University of Paderborn.¹⁰⁴ In addition, participants were supposed to choose a two-hour timeframe within the day, capture their experience of the place, and edit the final video down to two-minutes. One can argue that these criteria reflect the overall intention of the organizer, who aimed to create a collaborative global film by merging together the various videos, hence the ‘strong imprint’ of Max Schleser. It might be a subject of a debate, whether all these instructions limit the participants’ creativity or rather guide them to explore more deeply their potential. In relation to that, Schleser wrote that according to his experience, “it is important to set a common theme or framework to explore,”

¹⁰³ ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/user/24Frames24Hours/featured> (accessed 6 April 2014).

¹⁰⁴ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 6 April 2014).

so that the participants have something to start with and can connect with each others' topic.¹⁰⁵ Schleser thus presents the set criteria in a rather positive way. However, on the other hand, it is obvious that the project was leading the participants in a way so that the final 'product', the global city film, could be achieved and accomplished according to the organizers' visions. This represents a conflict between different views of video as a participatory medium.

The participatory video theorist Shirley A. White distinguishes between participatory video as a process, and participatory video as a product. As a process according to Shirley, participatory video is "simply a tool to facilitate interaction and enable self-expression", and "it is not intended to have a life beyond the immediate context".¹⁰⁶ In that case, it is the process of filming that is important for encouraging people's participation and creativity and the final video is not that important. On the other hand, participatory video as a product, Shirley claims, gives more value to the final video tape, or video, which is to be created.¹⁰⁷ If applied on the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, one can see a difference between what the project's website presents to its visitors, and between what Max Schleser said in the Skype meeting during the joint workshops in Panderborn and Wellington. The website seems to promote rather the creative process as a key element of the project: "By creating short video clips, participants are empowered to shape representations about themselves and their communities."¹⁰⁸ In the Skype conference on the other hand, Schleser said, that "what we envisioned, is to make a collaborative film, it's really trying to become a global city film."¹⁰⁹ That would indicate that the project was rather more oriented towards the final product and not so much on the process, which could lead one to question its participatory character.

Pursuing this argument further, it is also important to take into consideration that the final short film published on YouTube¹¹⁰ (not to be confused with the project's online platform <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#>) was edited by Max Schleser and not by the participants themselves, although they had an opportunity to give feedback on the editing before the final cut.¹¹¹ This points to another point Shirley A. White makes, i.e. that video can also become a very passive entity, when we for example interpret the images for ourselves without a dialogue or when we "have no control over the images as they present themselves".¹¹² On the other hand, as Schleser pointed out in our e-mail correspondence, it is very important that the participants

¹⁰⁵ Schleser, 2012, p. 401.

¹⁰⁶ White, 2003, p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁸ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 11 April 2014).

¹⁰⁹ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 11 April 2014).

¹¹⁰ M. Schleser, '#24F24H', [online video], 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAePH00DeTk> (accessed 11 April 2014).

¹¹¹ Schleser, 2012, p. 402.

¹¹² White, 2003, p. 66.

watch the final videos all together to strengthen the social and collaborative character of the project: “And it is key that we have a shared viewing of the films as a result.”¹¹³ Therefore, I would say that the participation in the creative process was limited only to the local level, where the participants were more or less free to film and edit whatever they found interesting, limited ‘only’ by the format and length of the film, but it was rather the organizer who had ‘power’ over the final film published on YouTube on the global scale.

Looking closely at some of the videos, it becomes obvious that the participants used large spaces to explore their mobile phones and to express their creativity on the local level when capturing their environment. Taking for example the German film *Klavier* by Lisa Jeske, Malte Kraus, Johanna Weichard and Maxmilian Zindel, one sees how creatively the team of filmmakers explored the (dis)advantages related to the proportions of the mobile phones.¹¹⁴ Their short film documents the interior of the piano, showing all little details of such a mechanism.

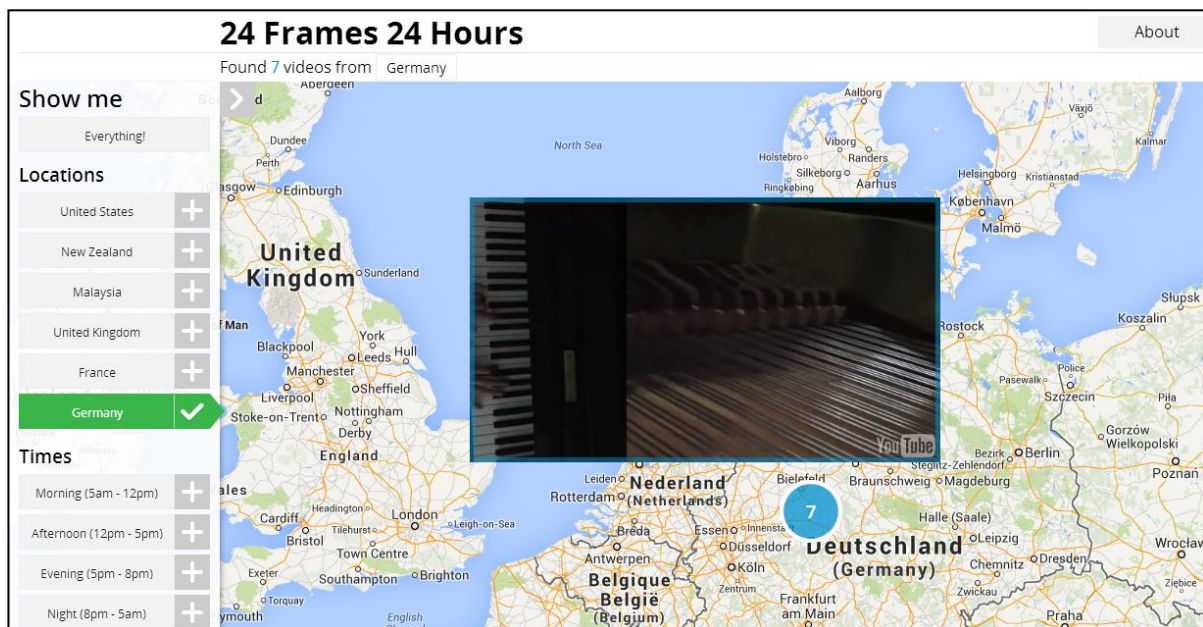


Figure 3: Snapshot from *Klavier*, dir. Lisa Jeske, Malte Kraus, Johanna Weichard and Maxmilian Zindel, Germany, 2013, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 19 May 2014).

Their initial silent shots of various shapes of the piano components showing the instrument as a complicated machine change slowly into a split-screen, where we can see and hear the relation between the person playing melody on the keyboard and the mechanical reaction it provokes in the instrument’s interior. This demonstrates how the team of the mobile filmmakers creatively explored the possibilities of a mobile phone as a filming device derived from its small portable size. As opposed to common digital cameras and video cameras, mobile

¹¹³ M. Schleser, interviewed by Michaela Rábová, e-mail, 1 April 2014.

¹¹⁴ *Klavier*, dir. Lisa Jeske, Malte Kraus, Johanna Weichard and Maxmilian Zindel, Germany, 2013, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 19 May 2014).

phone could have been lowered into the interior of the piano and thus reveal images that might have been hidden to a normal viewer. This aspect compensates the lower quality of the image, which is mostly dark and pixelated, which on the other hand underlines the documentary character of such shots.

Another example of a creative use of the mobile phone as a filming device is the *24 Frames 24 Hours* short film called *Strasbourg Cathedral* by Laurent Antonczak.¹¹⁵ The filmmaker actually used the disadvantage of the shaky image one can easily get when filming with a mobile phone because of its small size, as a resource. The unstable image combined with a dramatic music provokes a feeling of anxiety or stress. A big part of the film is constituted by the editing process. Some of the shots were shortened into less than second-long images quickly changing with each other, underlying the feeling of haste. Hence, this shows another example of the participants engaging creatively with their mobile phones, and exploring the possibilities for creative expressions. The disadvantage of the mobile phone in terms of image stability is here turned into an advantage, into a means for underlying the morning stress of a person rushing somewhere but still wishing to explore a place and share that impression. Hence, this video not only shows how creatively the mobile phone was used but it also depicts a very personal perception of a specific place, which might be perceived in a totally different way by someone else.

To conclude this subchapter, I would argue that the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* encouraged participation on a local level through a creative process, despite the criteria given to the participants by Max Schleser. The participants engaged with a technology of an everyday use and explored it in a creative way using the disadvantages and advantages of such filming device. Using their camera phones and being able to decide about the editing process, they could express their creativity in an unusual way. Furthermore, I would add that all the videos are very personal, capturing a very unique point of view. And I would argue that it is particularly the ‘personality’ that the participants could put into their short film, which stimulated their participation and creativity, because their own short film represented something meaningful to them. In those terms, I would agree with David Gauntlett, that people need to have personal motivation, something with which they can connect personally in order to get engaged in any kind of action.¹¹⁶ Mobile filmmaking can become very personal and very meaningful, especially to the young participants who have a closer connection with the technology and seek new ways of expression. It can help to represent themselves and share their stories with the rest of the world,

¹¹⁵ *Strasbourg Cathedral*, dir. Laurent Antonczak, France, 2011, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 19 May 2014).

¹¹⁶ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 114.

as was demonstrated by a few examples of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* videos, even though the participants could not participate fully in the process of creating the final ‘global film’ published on YouTube.

2.4. Collaborative filmmaking: connecting to make

Max Schleser described *24 Frames 24 Hours* as an ongoing international collaborative mobile-mentary project.¹¹⁷ The topics covered in this subsection are, in particular, the terms ‘international’ and ‘collaborative’, since the social aspect is an essential element of participation, as argued in the beginning of this chapter. The following text will explore the ways in which the project encouraged participants’ active engagement in their social environment locally as well as globally.

In the first round of the project in July 2011, two workshops about mobile filmmaking were run simultaneously, one in Wellington at the Massey University of New Zealand in collaboration with Te Papa Museum, and the second one at the University of Paderborn in Germany. These joint workshops involved forty-three participants, mostly students from Media, Film, and Communication Design departments, who produced twenty-three two-minute long videos at the end of the sessions.¹¹⁸ The second row of the project took place in September 2012, and involved for example students of Digital Video Media from New Zealand, France, United Kingdom and Malaysia. Several individual workshops were organized in between, such as one for the Mobile Art Conference in New York, the Festival for the Future in New Zealand focusing on innovation, and the Expanding Documentary Conference also in New Zealand. These last workshops were slightly different in terms of participants. First of all they were not led online in collaboration with another place and institution, and second, the participants were not only students but also industry professionals or just simply interested public.¹¹⁹

This overview permits a closer analysis of the social element of the project. One can see two levels of social engagement which crystallise within the project: the local and the global. Looking at the local level, participants of each workshop had to interact with the group of mobile filmmakers from the same city or area, which is possible to see in a video documenting Skype conference between the German and New Zealand groups.¹²⁰ This fact might point back to Gauntlett’s argument that creating something means connecting with someone with the same

¹¹⁷ Schleser, 2012, p. 401.

¹¹⁸ MINA, ‘Max Schleser’, [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/35411132> (accessed 5 April 2014).

¹¹⁹ Schleser, 2012, p. 402.

¹²⁰ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 5 April 2014).

interest.¹²¹ In most cases, the participants had to collaborate in smaller groups in order to produce their common short video. Hypothetically, in the case of the university workshops, the possibility that the participants knew each other locally before the actual workshop is very high, and also their motivation to participate was most probably similar, although this is very hard to prove without conducting interview with the workshop participants. In that sense, the workshops did not offer that much space for new encounters, at least not on the local level. At the same time, looking at a few photos published in the project's Facebook group which document the workshop at Te Papa Museum in New Zealand, one can see the participants having a vivid discussion and most probably cooperating on their common film, which might contribute to the argument that common action and cooperation might increase one's personal engagement in a group. Another example is a couple of videos produced by the UK students published on the YouTube channel *24 Frames 24 Hours*, in which they are filmed when collaborating on a common musical project, playing music together or waving and smiling at each other when filming one another in the break.¹²²

On the global level, interaction among the different workshop groups as well as individual participants was possible thanks to digital communication. In the case of joint online workshops, the different groups communicated directly via Skype, exchanging information as well as cultural particularities specific for their local place: "Guten Morgen!", "Guten Morgen ... from New Zealand, we say Kia Ora in Maori."¹²³ This contributes to Max Schleser's claim that even though the project ran on a global level, "every workshop is different and brings new dynamics to the project".¹²⁴ Based on my own experience, I would agree with Schleser: no matter if the template for a workshop remains the same, it is always the context in which it is placed, and who the participants are and how they interact, which determines the form of the workshop.

Apart from Skype, the Facebook group for *24 Frames 24 Hours* was set up at the beginning of the project, to be "used for workshop collaboration and also for young filmmakers to 'connect'".¹²⁵ Throughout the simultaneous university workshops, where groups were constituted from individuals from different countries, French, British and New Zealand students used it to literally 'find' each other and for internal communication among the team members: "Message to all FR/UK students! Hello, Can those of you who are pairing up add a comment

¹²¹ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 2.

¹²² '24f24h Tally Ho', [online video], 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ILsYYi8RgA> (accessed 5 April 2014).

¹²³ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', [online video], <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 5 April 2014).

¹²⁴ M. Schleser, interviewed by Michaela Rábová, e-mail, 1 April 2014.

¹²⁵ Ibidem.

here, so that you can all find one another?”¹²⁶ Besides reminders to the team members to check their inboxes and Google doc, some workshop participants also decided to post their videos directly on the Facebook group wall even though the project used mainly Vimeo and YouTube platforms for uploading the finished material. One of the reasons for that could be the participatory character of Facebook which allows people to comment and also get feedback from the other group members. Facebook represents the participatory culture of current converged media, described by the scholar Henry Jenkins, where the members believe that their posts matter and provoke interest of the other members.¹²⁷ This is interesting because despite such Facebook possibilities, there is very little discussion going on, and yet the participants still keep posting their videos there with the hope to get some feedback: “Hi! Here is my participation to the workshop. It's a little messy but I hope you will enjoy it <https://vimeo.com/50481271>.”¹²⁸ Even though the possibility to post and comment are the same in Vimeo and YouTube groups, Facebook is advantageous in its notification system, where every member of the group receives an immediate notification about any kind of activity in the group, provoking immediate conversation. From that point of view, the Vimeo and YouTube platforms were most probably used primarily to share the single videos with the rest of the workshop participants (not so much with the rest of the broader YouTube community), so that they could be screened and merged together by Max Schleser in the end of the project into the ‘global film’.¹²⁹

Another use of the Facebook group and motivation to participate and initiate a discussion was to get advice from other ‘experts’ within the group. One of the participants in the Panderborn University workshop shared the difficulties he was facing during the creative process:

I am constantly experiencing a problem with the video editing webpage stroome. When I try to upload multiple files it never works out. The error message is "Add entry call failed." My OS is Windows Vista with latest updates and Firefox 5.0. Has anyone the same problem? Or much better a solution or a hint what might be the problem?¹³⁰

By sharing his problem with the narrow community of specialists, the participant sought affiliation with other members of the group, trying to connect with those facing the same problem but also trying to get advice from those, who know how to solve it. Such action

¹²⁶ H. Keegan, Facebook post, *24 Frames 24 Hours* Facebook group, 22 March 2012, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/222696181104451/permalink/368238083216926/> (accessed 5 April 2014).

¹²⁷ H. Jenkins, *Confronting the challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2009, p. xi.

¹²⁸ A. K. Conroy, Facebook post, *24 Frames 24 Hours* Facebook group, 30 September 2012, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/222696181104451/?fref=ts> (accessed 5 April 2014).

¹²⁹ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 6 April 2014).

¹³⁰ J. Schienemeyer, Facebook post, *24 Frames 24 Hours* Facebook group, 8 July 2011, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/222696181104451/?fref=ts> (accessed 5 April 2014).

corresponds again to one of the characteristics of the participatory culture of current media as described by Henry Jenkins, where “experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices”.¹³¹

Last but not least, as mentioned before, Facebook not only served for communication among the project participants but also for young filmmakers to ‘connect’. One of the examples is a post written by a young UK student which led to his collaboration with the *24 Frames 24 Hours* project:

J. B. Wright: “Hey hey! Hope everyone's well? Just thought I'd share my recent burst of mobile creativity with everyone. I'm a regular user of Nanostudio for iPhone and find it incredibly easy to compose on the go – Physical Sound, undergroundfreelancer.com”

M. Schleser: “ Hey Jayy, would you be keen to produce some music for 24frames 24hours trailer ? Email or FB me your contact details if you are interested [24frames24hours@gmail.com]. Looking forward to hear from you. Cheers, Max Schleser”

J. B. Wright: “Inboxed you.”¹³²

The above analysis explored how the project encouraged connections among the project’s participants through mobile filmmaking. On a local level, the project involved people with the same interest who had to cooperate and engage in a common action in order to create their common film. Some of the workshops left more space for new encounters and more interdisciplinarity, such as the workshops outside of universities. However, the project allowed the participants to get involved in local communities as well as in global community of mobile filmmakers via the use of social networks. Even though the discussions and verbal interaction at the social networks has not been as vivid as one would expect, participants still keep posting their films there, most probably because they believe other people will watch the products of their creativity.

This chapter has discussed the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* from the perspective of a *process* of mobile filmmaking as it has been carried out during the workshops and discussed the theoretical concept of participation. Using the case study, it has explored how mobile filmmaking can be used to encourage people’s participation within different areas. Through the analysis of several individual videos, it has been shown that the project has contributed to the participants’ engagement in the physical public space. By using their mobile phones to create a short film and

¹³¹ Jenkins, 2009, p. xi.

¹³² J. B. Wright and M. Schleser, Facebook conversation, *24 Frames 24 Hours* Facebook group, from 3 July to 1 August 2012, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/222696181104451/?fref=ts> (accessed 5 April 2014).

share their message, the participants had to seek their personal connection with the public places, which can serve as an inspiration for other potential mobile filmmakers. Moreover, the analysis has shown that the project gave relatively enough freedom to the participants to explore their mobile phones as filming device with all its advantages and disadvantages and to create visual objects that are personally meaningful to the mobile phone users, which again increases their participation in their environment. On the global level though, the participants had less freedom to participate in the creation of the final film published on YouTube. Last but not least, this chapter has analysed in which way the project encourages participation in its social terms. The project contributed to the creation of new global communities such as the one in the Facebook group. On the local level, possibilities for creating new communities and getting involved with unknown groups and individuals are determined by the environment of the workshops, i.e. depending on whether it is open to public or only to students of particular course. Workshops open to public can create new connections and new exchanges regarding knowledge and point of views.

Chapter Three: Audience participation and “Dynamically-generated international collaborative mobile-documentary”

The previous chapter analysed how the process of filming via mobile devices within the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* encouraged participation of the users in their social as well as physical environment. This chapter focuses on the other part of the project, the ‘final product’ which is the online platform www.24frames24hours.org.nz, where all the individual videos created by the participants of the project are uploaded and presented to the visitors of the website. The organizer intended that the final ‘film’ is co-created by the audience: “This site allows you to watch the dynamically-generated documentary by piecing together the individual video clips created as part of the mobile-filmmaking workshops.”¹³³ The following chapter thus explores the project from the audience point of view, i.e. those watching the final videos at the online platform, and examines whether and how it encourages viewers’ participation in the creative process and the project’s topic. This will be done by placing *24 Frames 24 Hours* online platform in the discourse of new media and the historical genre of film.

When talking about the visual result of the project *24 Frames 24 Hours*, meaning the project’s online platform, one encounters difficulties about what to actually call it. Is it an ordinary website? Is it a ‘product’? Is it a documentary - as the organizers chose to call it? Or an artwork? For practical reasons, I have chosen to use the term ‘hypervideo’ which was used by the project organizers to label the website. According to Ian Smith, David Balcom and Nitin Sawhney, authors of an experimental project called *HyperCafé*, “‘Hypervideo’ is digital video and hypertext, offering to its user and author the richness of multiple narratives, even multiple means of structuring narrative (or non-narrative), combining digital video with a polyvocal, linked text.”¹³⁴ This definition points to the fact that the project’s website is a sort of hybrid between an object within the area of new media and film industry. For that reason, the project’s hypervideo is approached from two angles to be able to find potential originality of such a mobile filmmaking project in the area of audience participation: firstly from the point of view of new media objects and some of their characteristics, and secondly in line with the history of cinema in order to find whether *24 Frames 24 Hours* extends audience participation.

3.1. New media object: interactivity as a determinant of audience participation

Communicating via online networks, recording digital videos on smartphones, distributing the visual images through a website - this clearly shows that the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* and its

¹³³ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/> (accessed 21 April 2014).

¹³⁴ N. Sawhney, D. Balcom, and I. Smith, ‘HyperCafé: Narrative and Aesthetic Properties of Hypervideo’, *Proceedings of the the seventh ACM conference on Hypertext*, New York, ACM, 1996, p. 1.

form are determined by the emergence and development of new media. But what is new media? Lev Manovich, who is one of the leading scholars on this topic, claims that new media “represents a convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing and media technologies”, which has been done by “translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible for computers”.¹³⁵ The main characteristics of new media objects according to Manovich are numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding. For the purpose of this research, only three characteristics are discussed in relation to *24 Frames 24 Hours*: modularity, i.e. new media objects represent collections of elements such as images or sounds, which can be combined into larger objects without losing their separate identity, since they are stored separately; automation, meaning automation of numerous operations concerning media creation, manipulation and access which might result in reducing the ‘human aspect’ in the creative process; and variability, i.e. new media objects are not fixed and stable, as they exist in numerous and probably infinite versions.¹³⁶ These aspects of new media objects are of particular interest in relation to the case study, because, as will be analysed later on, they are influence, even as they emerge, from audience interaction with the hypervideo.

The following subchapter thus approaches the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo from the perspective of new media objects. It starts with a brief discussion on different concepts of interactivity which is necessary for the later analysis. It then explores how the hypervideo can be positioned within the field of new media in terms of interactivity and audience engagement, and questions in which way this ‘object’ is new as opposed to conventional filmmaking.

3.1.1. What is interactivity in relation to audience?

The aspects of interactivity have been discussed largely among scholars who pose different points of view. Some of them link interactivity solely to the emergence of new technologies. One of such examples is the scholar Henry Jenkins who draws a clear distinction between interactivity and participation by claiming that interactivity emerged with the development of new technologies and their properties, while participation on the other hand “is shaped by cultural and social protocols”. Jenkins thus sees interactivity as something rather limiting, being “pre-structured” by the designer of the interactive environment, whereas participation, according to him, gives more control over the content to the “media consumers”.¹³⁷ Jenkins’ view of interactivity is therefore quite narrow, connecting it only with the computer technology.

¹³⁵ Manovich, 2001, p. 44.

¹³⁶ Manovich, 2001, pp. 49 – 64.

¹³⁷ Jenkins, 2006, p. 133.

John B. Thompson, author of *The Media and Modernity*, sees interactivity in broader social terms not only related to new technologies, therefore he talks rather about interaction and defines its three types: face-to-face, mediated interaction, where means such as a letter or a telephone possess interactivity, and quasi-mediated interaction addressed to a non-specific number of recipients, creating situations where individuals communicate together and create social exchange,¹³⁸ which could refer to an example of a film audience sharing their impressions about a movie.

Such a sociological concept of interactivity can be broadened by a psychological dimension, which is presented by Nico Carpentier. He perceives the audience rather as an active body and claims that the interaction of audience “refers to the process of signification and interpretation triggered by media consumption”.¹³⁹ Carpentier thus presents a very broad point of view, where an audience is actively engaged with a film just by interpreting the visuals for themselves and to each other, and by feeling the emotions those images recall in them.

Another scholar Jens F. Jensen sees interactivity as a “measure of media’s ability to let a user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication”.¹⁴⁰ In that sense, interactivity can be seen as the extent to which the user can participate in content creation.

From this discussion, one can notice that interactivity in relation to audience has various forms. We will come across these concepts throughout the following subchapters, depending on which context the case study is placed in. However, it is necessary at this point to make a link between interactivity and participation, since there might be a risk of interchanging those two terms even though they do not mean the same. I would state that interactivity is a characteristic of any kind of e.g. media, object, performance, that depending on its degree allows participation, i.e. participation of the user/audience in the formation and creation of the content, as well as participation in the particular topic.

3.1.2. “New media documentary projects”

Interactivity is one of the components of what the researcher and filmmaker Ersan Ocak calls “new media documentary projects”, a sort of motion pictures within the field of new media. Even though he uses the traditional terminology, i.e. documentary, he argues that these projects are new in the way they are produced and consumed which is due to the computerization in culture. He refuses to see new media documentary projects as a ‘continuity’ or ‘extension’ of

¹³⁸ Thompson, 1995, pp. 82 – 87.

¹³⁹ Carpentier, 2011, p. 66.

¹⁴⁰ Jensen, 1998, p. 201.

traditional cinema.¹⁴¹ Ocak comes up with a set of aspects that characterise the ‘newness’ of these new media documentary projects: i) they use a non-linear storytelling structure; ii) they have open-ended narrative structures, which is enabled by their iii) database structure; and iv) they use interactivity as a means for representation of the visual narrative.¹⁴²

For a better understanding, I will try to explain it directly as applied to the case study of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo. Even though the single videos have a linear structure and they have a clear beginning and end often marked by the symbol of time (e.g. watch, clock, bell), as soon as they are juxtaposed together, their linearity disappears, as we can get up to three or four pieces of mini-stories screened at the same time. Hence, the result can be several parallel plot lines as opposed to the linear narrative of other conventional documentaries. This is allowed by one of the characteristics of new media objects as defined by Manovich – the modularity of the hypervideo, where independent videos can be combined to larger-scale objects while still preserving their identity (such as their music, linearity, place they come from etc.).

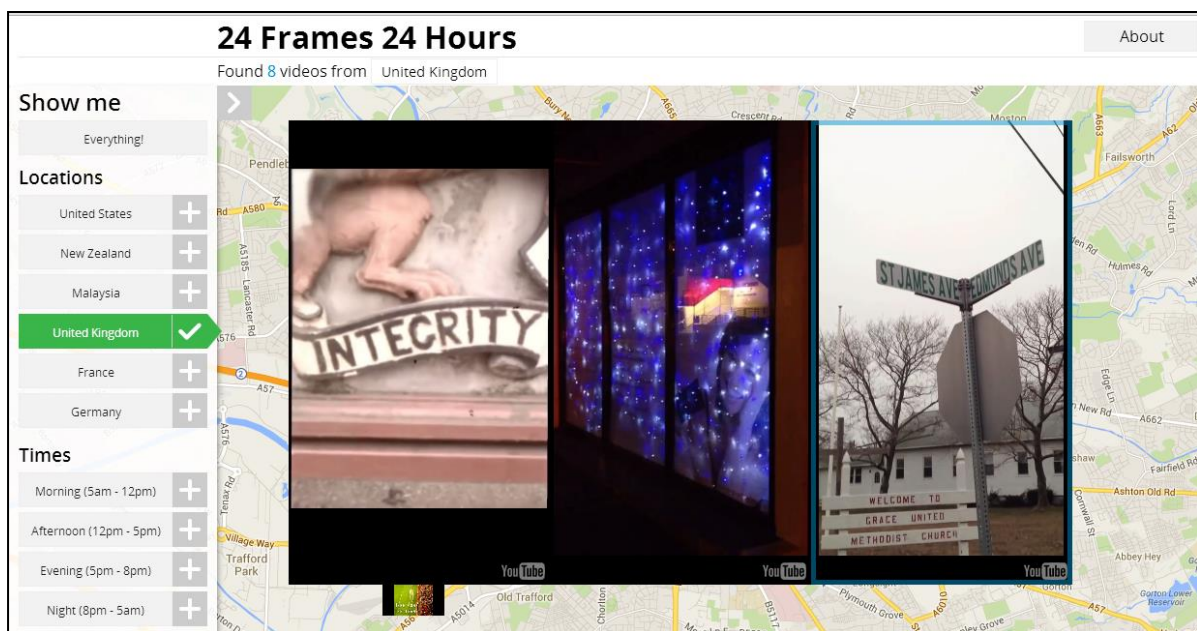


Figure 4: Snapshot from 24 Frames 24 Hours, showing the modularity of the hypervideo <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 22 May 2014).

Regarding the ending, the open-ended narrative can be observed in the collection of the videos as a whole, since every individual video passes the ‘relay’ to the next one by showing the time symbol, but also the website offers an option to loop the individual videos. This also refers to another feature of new media objects – the variability. The hypervideo as an object is never finished, never fixed, it is constantly changing as a result of by audience interaction with the content.

¹⁴¹ E. Ocak, ‘New Forms of Documentary-Filmmaking within New Media’, *Avanca Cinema International Conference*, 2012, p. 962.

¹⁴² Ocak, 2012, p. 962.

As for the third point, the structure of the website resembles a database, an organized collection of data showing the list of places, times and topics on the left side of the screen, displaying the selected videos on the right together with their geographic location in the background, which helps the viewer to better navigate in the content. According to Manovich, database is to the computer age what narrative is to cinema – “the key form of cultural expression”.¹⁴³ He claims that numerous new media objects do not use storytelling and that they do not have beginning or end. For him, database is an alternative form to narrative. However, I would allow myself to disagree with Manovich because one can say that the hypervideo does not have a beginning and end but that still does not mean that there is no story. When looking at the individual videos of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, there is certainly a story – a personal story lived during two hours at a certain place on the Earth. When juxtaposed together, the individual videos become a larger object with non-linear narrative and with an open end. However, one can still perceive it as a collective story created at different places and different times but joint and re-created in the particular object. The topic of narrative will be further discussed within the discourse of cinema in the next subchapter, and it is exactly this feature which might position *24 Frames 24 Hours* on the boundary between new media and traditional cinema.

As for the final characteristics of new media documentary projects outlined by Ocak, the website is interactive in the sense that the audience can manipulate with the content and create their own ‘objects’. This is again connected to all three characteristics of new media objects defined by Manovich – modularity, variability and automation. The modularity and variability allow the users to interact with the material to a certain degree. However, automation caused by computerization of the data limits the extent to which the user can interact with the website and participate in the content-creation. Therefore, I would argue that the freedom of creativity within *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo might be just an illusion: it is still the administrator of the website or even the technology itself which determines the possibilities for audience participation. This would be in direct relation to Henry Jenkin’s argument that interactivity is something ‘pre-structured’ and less ‘organic’, determined by the technology.¹⁴⁴ We might think that we actually have control over the content and over our created ‘objects’, but it is rather the interface which determines our steps and define the extent of our creativity.¹⁴⁵

In the case of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo, as a viewer, one can only influence the combination of the images, not their form, nor their narrative, nor is it even possible to directly

¹⁴³ Manovich, 2001, p. 194.

¹⁴⁴ Jenkins, 2006, p. 133

¹⁴⁵ When used in computing, interface can refer to two areas: hardware interface and user interface. A hardware interface is a point or a boarder where two dissimilar electronic devices communicate with each other. User interface is the means through which a user interacts with such a device.

comment on the videos. This means that the project's platform does not allow direct participation in the topic by a personal contribution, as it is the case in for example another new media documentary project called *7 billion Others*.¹⁴⁶

7 billion Others has been an ongoing documentary project since 2003 consisting of more than six thousands interviews with people all around the world on the same topics. Besides the already uploaded videos in the database-like website, viewers can directly film or upload their short film or write a text and tell their story, which allows the audience not only to interact with the website but also directly identify with the project. In that sense, *24 Frames 24 Hours* website interactivity is limited and does not lead the audience to direct participation in the creative process. This is altered by the Facebook group where anyone can upload their video contribution and comment on other's videos too, but Facebook on the other hand does not allow the juxtaposition of several videos, which leads to the loss of the originality of the project. The time and space dimension as well as the local/global dynamic created by juxtaposing the different videos disappears.

Regarding the originality of new media documentary projects, I would disagree with Ocak that the aspects by which he defines them make these visual objects something new. If one looks in the history of motion pictures, similar characteristics can be traced in earlier examples of cinema: open-ended narratives can be found in series or trilogies, and non-linear narrative appears for example in the so-called essay film genre (e.g. *Man with a camera* by Dziga Vertov from 1929, or *La Jetée* by Chris Marker from 1962) or in several Michel Gondry's films (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* from 2004, or *Mood Indigo* from 2013), as well as in music videos (e.g. *Darling, it's true* by Locksley). In this sense, new media documentary projects are not as original as Ocak claims them to be, and most of the characteristics point to the fact that they can actually be perceived as a continuation of conventional cinema – an argument that is further explored in the following sub-chapter. Nevertheless, what can be concluded is that the newness of *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo lies predominantly in: i) its database-like structure which is not common in other types of media (but I disagree with Manovich that the database lacks narrative), and ii) in its potential to encourage direct audience participation and creativity on a global level thanks to the possibilities of Web 2.0. However, this potential to involve audience in the content creation and in the cause depends largely on its extent of interactivity, which is determined by the automation of the data but also by the actual designer of the website.

¹⁴⁶ L. Treussard, G. Pons, A. Zevacco, '7 billion of Others', <http://www.7billionothers.org/node/64> (accessed 5 March 2014).

3.2. Audience participation during cinema history

Seeing the hypervideo *24 Frames 24 Hours* through the lenses of film in its traditional sense, i.e. to see it as a continuation of historical development of cinema, which presents motion pictures to the audience, might have several reasons. One reason to put on these ‘spectacles’ might be the fact, that the organizers themselves used the traditional vocabulary, stating that the aim of the project was to create a “global city film”.¹⁴⁷ The project’s website also uses the common term “documentary” connected with traditional ‘one-to-many’ production of a visual material (as opposed to ‘many-to-many’ prod-user culture), which is ‘served’ to the viewer. Last but not least, the hypervideo is presented to the audience on a screen, which is in common with traditional film screenings, with the only and relevant difference: in traditional cinema screenings, couple of dozens of spectators share an experience at certain time and at a certain location, whereas in the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, thousands of viewers at different times and different locations are able to watch the same material and potentially share their experience virtually through the Internet. This shows the shift from ‘locality’ to ‘globality’ of this filmic event. In this subsection, I would like to draw a few parallels between the project’s hypervideo and examples from the film history in relation to interactivity, in order to explore if and how the project’s hypervideo extends audience participation in screenings.

Throughout film history, audience participation in creating the story or influencing the screening itself might seem rather non-existent and the spectators might have appeared as a rather passive unit. One could say that the audience, whether in cinema or any other screening place, comes, watches the already made story, and with no intervention ‘consumes’ the movie. Of course, viewers can decide not to watch the motion pictures, or to interrupt the screening by e.g. changing a channel or shouting, but in general, this will have no influence on the story itself which is already created and follows its script. A different point of view is presented by the already mentioned scholars J. B. Thomson, who takes into consideration the social side of interactivity (face-to-face interaction where the spatial-temporal dimension is shared, or the “quasi-mediated interaction”, where the audience receives symbolic forms created by someone else not physically present)¹⁴⁸, and Nico Carpentier, who sees audience as interacting and participating by interpreting the consumed media material for themselves. These two points of view might nevertheless lead to a statement that every film is interactive in its own way. Therefore, this thesis explores interactivity from a narrower perspective, focusing on more active social and mental audience engagement in the screening and in the content creation. From that

¹⁴⁷ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, [online video], 2012, <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 24 April 2014).

¹⁴⁸ Thompson, 1995, pp. 81 – 84.

point of view, active audience involvement in screenings and creations of a film can be traced since the beginning of cinema at the turn of the 19th and 20th century which is described in the following text.

3.2.1. Singalong films of the 1920s and the new media documentary project

One of the examples of audience interaction with the screened content from the early stages of cinema are the so called ‘singalong films’ which became extremely popular especially in Great Britain and USA during the 1920s, and coincided with the institutionalization of community singing movement.¹⁴⁹ It is important to remember that the cinema was still in its silent phase which allowed singing during the screening, and on the other hand served to complete the actual film. In that sense, one can draw a parallel between them and the new media documentary projects, described in the previous subchapter, which use interactivity as a tool for representation of the visual narrative. The visual material of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo could not be screened and completed unless the user or rather ‘prod-user’ interacts with it.

The first singalong film released in Great Britain was the *Milestone Melodies* dating from 1926, and other ones followed due to the popularity of the genre until they were crowded out by the ‘talkies’.¹⁵⁰ According to the author Malcolm Cook, these films were “fully intended to provoke a communal vocal reaction”, so that any kind of audience would be interested and engaged in the song, and they were advertised with the emphasis on “their interactive nature as their primary purpose”.¹⁵¹ From this description, singalong films, similarly to *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo, were designed to provoke active engagement of the audience, and moreover to incite a collective action. When entering the *24 Frames 24 Hours* website, the visitor is encouraged to not only watch but to actively engage with the material: “This site allows you to watch the dynamically-generated documentary by piecing together the individual video clips created as part of the mobile-filmmaking workshops.” The tutorial on the webpage asks the ‘producer’ to choose locations, times and themes she or he wants to see, and non-directly encourages him to be ‘more creative’: “Videos can be repositioned by clicking and dragging. [...] You can have multiple videos open at a time.”¹⁵²

Another similarity between the singalong films and the new media documentary projects is the ‘director’ behind the scene who conducts and influences the actions of the audience who might think to possess control over the content and their action. In the case of singalong films, a

¹⁴⁹ M. Cook, ‘Animating the Audience: Singalong Films in Britain in the 1920s’, in J. Brown and A. Davison (eds.), *The Sounds of the Silents in Britain*, Oxford Scholarship Online, January 2013, pp. 222-236.

¹⁵⁰ Cook, 2013, p. 222.

¹⁵¹ Cook, 2013, p. 223.

¹⁵² M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 30 April 2014).

form of “animated indicator for the lyrics appeared in all these films, whether a conductor [...], the common bouncing ball, or [...] the production company’s trademark moving from word to word” which guided audience’s involvement.¹⁵³ In the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, the ‘director’ is the actual web-designer and the technology itself, which controls the interface and influences the extent of the website’s interactivity, as well as the actual automation of the data. During the screenings of singalong films, audience could choose not to sing or sing a different song or line, which would give another dimension to the collective experience of the audience but would not accomplish the film in its entirety, as the films were not designed for multiple songs and melodies.

Looking at the example of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, the possibility to ‘not obey’ the ‘director’ is even lower unless one possesses the capability to hack the system. The possibility to be creative is limited by the database structure; one can only combine videos in various ways but not actually cut or add any material, restructure or change the visualization of the website. Moreover, not only is the choice and creativity of the prod-user limited by the interface but also by the technical parameters of the screening device. The regular computer screen does not allow the combination of more than four videos at the same time and only in horizontal orientation. From that perspective, similarly to the bouncing ball or an animated conductor which the audience was supposed to follow in the singalong films, the website visitors have to follow the ‘rules’ of the online platform. Such finding would confirm J. F. Jensen’s argument that interactivity of a medium is determined by its extent and potential to allow the user influence the content of such media,¹⁵⁴ which in this case would be not only be determined by the interface but also by the size of the screen as a medium communicating the images.

Drawing from the comparison with the singalong films, it becomes apparent that the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo has a number of characteristics in common with this early-cinema genre but with some little specificities related to their era. For example, they both possess the potential to provoke active participation of the audience in the creative process but they are different in the way they are presented to the audience. In the singalong films, the audience participation occurs rather on a local level, allowing the spectators to interact physically face-to-face. Their interaction thus comprises a high social dimension, corresponding with Thompson’s view of interaction as a very human activity regardless the change and innovation of media.¹⁵⁵ The hypervideo, on the other hand, does not encourage as much active participation on a local level, since the audience is most probably one viewer alone in front of the screen. The

¹⁵³ Cook, 2013, p. 231.

¹⁵⁴ Jensen, 1998, p. 201.

¹⁵⁵ Thompson, 1995, p. 81.

hypervideo thus lacks one of the essential aspects of participation as described by Jackie Shaw and Clive Robertson, i.e. the collective action.¹⁵⁶ Since the website does not allow the ‘producers’ to comment and interact with each other, it does not encourage audience participation on a global level neither does it provoke any collective action.

What also characterizes both of these timely distant genres is that they both emerged during the time of important technological changes and innovation. In the case of the singalong films, they engaged actively with e.g. a gramophone, telephone and radio which contributed to more global spread of such films. This is similar to *24 Frames 24 Hours*, which uses the current technology and convergence of media to spread the videos, shorten distances, and get a wider global audience. Yet, the era in which these two genres emerged is different, resulting in different phenomena. While the singalong films still had to be adapted into the local context so that the audience would connect with the content, the individual videos were assigned to all have the same format caused by the standard of current camera phones all over the world. Moreover, the nowadays globalized look of westernized cities resulted in the fact that most of the videos look the same, no matter where they were filmed. When one picks for example three videos with the same theme of ‘journey’ but from three different locations – video by Gabriel Winn from Great Britain, video from New Zealand entitled *MPT* and Malaysian video called *Sam - Travelling on a bus*, it is possible to see shots of public transport in all three of them. The interior of the means of public transport looks pretty much the same: a high standard with seats covered with patterned fabric, buttons signaling message to the driver, and a system of bars to allow people to hold themselves if they are not sitting. The only difference one can observe between a bus in Malaysia, United Kingdom and in New Zealand is the colour of the bars and various patterns on the seats for the passengers, but the quality and organisation of the interior looks the same.

In conclusion of this analogy, I would argue that the singalong films possessed a high potential to encourage audience’s participation in a collective action since according to Gauntlett, connecting with others provokes higher involvement and shared creativity brings more happiness.¹⁵⁷ In contrast, the project’s hypervideo allows the audience to participate only in the creation of a new collage of videos, not to connect with other ‘producers’, nor does it allow to contribute to the content by adding one’s own video. I would compare it to a building set for kids consisting of cubes of different colours but of the same shape. The kid can engage with the cubes, build them on top of each other, next to each other and create different combinations but can’t change the basic element – the cube. Whereas in the singalong films, the audience could be

¹⁵⁶ Shaw and Robertson, 1997, p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 115.

compared to a group of children building a puzzle together – a collective action, where if one cannot find a piece (a note or word), the others help to find and fill in the missing part.

3.2.2. Interactive narrative

During the 1950s and 1960s, an interesting novelty appeared on the cinema scene, when auteurs like Akira Kurosawa and Alain Resnais came up with an interactive narrative implying bifurcations, jumps in the story, repetitions, and even choices. According to Carlos Duarte, such narrative requires mental intervention of the audience in order to understand the events that are being told, which results into an active viewer.¹⁵⁸ Kurosawa and Resnais were certainly not the first directors to offer an alternative to the existing linear narrative. One can think of for example *Un Chien Andalou* by Luis Buñuel (1929) or *Man with a Movie Camera* by Dziga Vertov (1929) which did not follow any linear structure, but one can say that Kurosawa was innovative in the way he intended to involve the spectator in the story.

Duarte gives an example of Kurosawa's film *Rashomon* from 1950, which tells a story about one committed murder presented to the judge by four different people telling four different versions of the story. The spectator is put into the role of the judge investigating the crime by the director's use of a subjective shot – when the witnesses are speaking to the judge, they are speaking directly to the camera, and the voice of the judge comes out as if it was the camera or directly the spectator speaking. Through this technique, Kurosawa involves the audience in the story, who have to make a conscious choice throughout the film as four different interpretations of the murder are presented, without knowing what the truth is in the end. The 'spect-actor'¹⁵⁹ is thus intellectually interacting with the visual material and co-creates the story in his or her mind.

Besides the film stated above, many more films have used interactive narrative throughout the film history, such as *Sliding Doors* (Peter Howitt, 1998) or *Run Lola, Run* (Tom Tykwer, 1998) to name just a few. When comparing the films with interactive narrative with the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo, it can be concluded that both encourage the audience's engagement with the visual material, but in a different way. In the case of films with interactive narrative, the spectator interacts intellectually, creating links among different hints in the story without physically influencing the storyline, which refers to Carpentier's concept of interactivity

¹⁵⁸ C. Duarte de Sena Caires, 'Towards the interactive filmic narrative—"Transparency": An experimental approach', *Computers and Graphics*, Volume 31, Issue 6, December 2007, pp. 800–808, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cag.2007.08.003> (accessed 22 May 2014).

¹⁵⁹ J.L. Weissberg, *Présence à distance. Déplacement virtuel et réseaux numériques: pourquoi nous ne croyons plus la télévision*. *Communications et Civilisation*, Paris, Harmattan Edition, 2002, cited in C. Duarte de Sena Caires, 2007, p. 801.

as a mental interaction of a user/viewer with a medium.¹⁶⁰ In the case of the hypervideo, the audience interacts not only intellectually but also physically by choosing and piecing different videos together and creating their unique collage of narratives. An example of an audience's intellectual interaction can be their connection between various videos and the locations where these videos were filmed. This is supported by Google maps in the background, but the viewer has to actively connect the particular video with a place in the world in his or her mind, an actual physical place, not only a dot on the map. If this is achieved, the dimension of the project increases even more. If the viewer is able to pick several videos from e.g. Germany, New Zealand and United States, and connect them with the actual spatial dimension, the project's website gains much more depth.

Concerning the actual narrative of the hypervideo, it is composed by each individual narrative of the single videos. Every single video has its beginning, middle part and end, connected to a specific place and a specific time. When combined together, they create a hypervideo with a multi-layered narrative, where one can choose which particular bit of that hypervideo she or he wants to watch, opening up possibilities for creating new narratives. By combining three videos at the same time, one can for example start the day at 8am with a visit to Strasbourg's cathedral, have an afternoon walk in the botanical gardens of New Zealand and finish the day off by listening to the story of a destructive hurricane in New Jersey over a pint of beer. This shows that the hypervideo's narrative is a highly interactive one in physical as well as intellectual terms, and allows the viewer to create and re-create new stories out of the existing ones in the individual videos. It also leads us back to Lev Manovich's argument that database is an alternative to a narrative form.¹⁶¹ By using this example, I would disagree with Manovich and argue that through its interactivity, database can actually help the viewer to create narrative, which is demonstrated at the example of *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo.

3.2.3. Interactive cinema as a collective experience

The first interactive movie in the history of cinema is generally considered to be *Kinoautomat: One Man and His House* (1967) produced and directed in Czechoslovakia by Radúz Činčera and presented at Expo'67 in Montréal. The film tells a story about a man called Mr Novák who finds himself caught up in difficult situations, where he has to decide between two options representing moral dilemmas. During every screening, audience had an option to vote in five key situations of the film by pressing green (YES) or red (NO) button on the voting device provided to every member of the audience, and the replies would be registered by the projectionist. The

¹⁶⁰ Carpentier, 2011, p. 66.

¹⁶¹ Manovich, 2001, p. 194.

essential component of the screenings were two moderators who presented the different choices to the audience and encouraged them to action and choices. The movie had been hidden from public attention for a very long time since its last cinematic screening in 1974, until it was rediscovered and reconstructed by the filmmaker and scholar Chris Hales and Činčera's daughter Anna Činčerová.¹⁶²

Coming from Czech Republic, I had the chance to be part of the screening in the Prague cinema Světozor in 2010, where the film returned after almost forty years, because it was prohibited by the communist authorities due to its democratic elements. Equipped with some sort of a remote control, we (the audience) entered the projection hall with high expectations. We were the witnesses of for example Mr Novák's neighbour locking herself out of her home with only one towel around her body. She decides to knock on Novák's door to ask for help and shelter. In that moment, the moderator stopped the projection, entered on the stage in full light and in a theatrical way presented the precarious situation: the young woman is in a hapless situation and moreover she is beautiful but on the other hand, Novák's wife might return home in every moment to celebrate her birthday. Should Novák let her in or not? I was getting excited that all of us in the hall could actually influence the flow of the story by having a choice and showing it. The over-all experience after the projection was the feeling of originality and experiencing something new and very interactive compared to traditional movie screening. Not only did I feel able to express my own opinion and voice in terms of the storyline, but I also felt part of a bigger collective that shared this cinematic experience and collectively 'pushed' the story where we wanted.

This was my impression. In reality, due to the technical and technological limitations of that time, it would be almost impossible to stop the current reel and quickly put on another one with that particular version of the story, as Chris Hales notices.¹⁶³ The film has a fixed beginning and ending, and the scriptwriters had to develop a scenario in which two possible versions of the story combine together to lead to the exactly same situation, where the audience votes again, which repeats five times. Moreover, the spontaneity of the moderators would only be play-acted since they have practiced their parts to fit in the film's sequenced 'pause' in seconds, therefore the projected film was not actually paused but continued with the same still image on the screen.¹⁶⁴

After discovering this, one can feel betrayed and the situation can be compared in a way to the experience of the *24 Frames 24 Hours*. In the case of the project's hypervideo, one also

¹⁶² C. Hales, 'Cinematic Interaction: From *Kinoautomat* to *Cause and Effect*,' *Digital Creativity*, 16(1) 2005, pp. 54 – 64.

¹⁶³ Hales, 2005, p. 57.

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem.

feels that the number of choices is almost indefinite and perceives herself/himself as a ‘co-creator’ of the final “dynamically-generated documentary”, as the organizers chose to call the visual result.¹⁶⁵ Even though the technology has progressed remarkably since the *Kinoautomat*’s creation in the sixties, and the possibilities for richer and more ‘branched’ realization of the script are higher, the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo still demonstrates the limitations that technology can have on an audience’s participation in the creative process. There is an option to choose and combine six different locations, four different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening and night) and six different themes (Home, Journey, Landmark, Nature, Leisure and People), which gives an impression of originality whenever we enter the website. However, as it has been noticed before, a common laptop screen does not allow the combination of more than three or four portrait oriented videos at a time. Also, it has to be taken into consideration that quite a number of videos have been filmed in the landscape orientation which makes them difficult to combine with others as it is not marked which are horizontally oriented. Moreover, if we use a smartphone to access the hypervideo, the actual medium with which the project was experimenting, the surprise is even bigger since the individual videos are played automatically through YouTube, which does not allow the user to play more than one video at a time. Added to this is the fact that the website does not allow any kind of discussion or commentary, the limitations to participate actively in the content creation grow even more.

On the other hand, the audience of the hypervideo can still for example make a choice between which music or sound they want to listen to by scrolling the cursor over the particular played video, which makes the other sounds mute. This feature can be compared to *Kinoautomat* in the sense that people still have a choice between ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and their choice will influence at least the immediate continuation of the story, regardless of the fact that both versions will meet at the same point anyway.

The most important factor in both cases, in order to get audience participating in the screening, is the feeling of having a choice. If the audience knew that, no matter if they vote yes or no, the result will be the same, they would most probably disengage with the voting system and become a passive audience. Similarly, from my own experience as a spectator of the *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo, after realizing the limitations of the website, I became quickly ‘tired’ of piecing various videos together, and did not combine more than nine videos during my first visit of the website, as opposed to the different experience from YouTube, where I was able to watch twenty videos in a row, in a linear structure and see some of the comments written by the audience.

¹⁶⁵ M. Schleser, ‘24 Frames 24 Hours’, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 2 May 2014).

Regarding the participation of the audience, these two cases are different in the way audience experiences the visual material. In both cases, the viewer engages with the film or video intellectually on a personal level, making individual choices and perceptions of the narratives. However, in the case of *Kinoautomat*, the experience of the audience is collective; they become a sort of community for the time of the screening, making democratic decisions on majority of votes, also physically interacting with each other on a local level. In that sense, *Kinoautomat* is more interactive in J. B. Thompson's understanding of interactivity as a social interaction among individuals.¹⁶⁶ The spectators can directly interact face-to-face with each other but also with the film via the voting device.

All these aspects point out to favourable conditions of *Kinoautomat* for people's participation as described by Jackie Shaw and Clive Robertson, implying connecting with each other to make collective decisions.¹⁶⁷ The spectators show active interest in influencing the story because they see the potential risk that their choice might be outvoted by other members of the audience, and they also participate because the participation has a certain aim – to decide collectively on the continuation of Mr Novák's life in the film, all this provided by the democratic character of the voting.

This is different in the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours* hypervideo, where the audience is most usually an individual viewer in front of the screen. The choice of how to interact with the visual material is higher compared to *Kinoautomat* offering various combinations of times, locations and stories, but the viewer gets quickly disengaged because of the non-possibility to interact with other viewers on the global level, as the website does not offer any kind of online discussion forum. Even though the website allows the audience to partially participate in the creative process by creating new and new collages, it still leaves them in the role of a 'viewer' rather than a 'participant/prod-user'. This argument corresponds with David Gauntlett's comment:

There is a pleasure in seeing a project from start to finish, and the process provides space for thought and reflection, and helps to cultivate a sense of self as an active, creative agent. But there is also a desire to connect and communicate with others, and – especially online – to be an active participant in dialogues and communities.¹⁶⁸

The collective experience, whether on local or global level, is a crucial precondition for audience participation. Filmmakers like Chris Hales, who engages audience on the local level by actually letting them appear on the screen and even physically influence the characters on the screen

¹⁶⁶ Thompson, 1995, pp. 82 – 87.

¹⁶⁷ Shaw and Robertson, p. 23.

¹⁶⁸ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 222.

during his 'show' *Cause and Effect*,¹⁶⁹ or the already mentioned team behind the project *7 billion Others*, have realized how important a collective experience is, whether on local or global level, for getting audience participated in the creative process as well as in the topic itself. Therefore, in order to increase audience participation in the creative process, in the idea of the project as well as in the community activities around the project, the organizer of *24 Frames 24 Hours* might also want to provide space for interaction not only with the visual material but also with the directors of the individual videos and other members of the global audience.

3.3. Constantly changing: never completed medium

Recently, an important change has been made to the project's website, which mirrors the character of mobile filmmaking as a quickly changing and transformative medium. This subchapter thus brings new light to the case study and confirms some of the previous findings.

When going to the project's website <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#>, one can now discover three new icons at the top right corner of the screen which have been added very recently. One of the icons 'About' redirects the website visitor back at the introduction page where the concept of the project is briefly explained. This change has therefore not brought anything new in terms of information neither in terms of user's participation in the content creation. However, this is not the case of the two other icons.

Major changes in audience participation came with addition of the icon 'Contribute', which allows the viewer to actually become a participant of the project by uploading his/her own video. The uploading process has to go through the YouTube channel again, since the website does not allow the user to upload the video files directly from their computer. One can simply insert the YouTube URL of the video, fill in the information about the video such as title, author, time, location including the geographical coordinates so that the video can be placed directly on the Google maps, and the themes the video touches upon. Nevertheless, in my interview with Max Schleser, we touched upon the difficulties connected with this new feature. The process of adding the video on the website is still quite complicated requiring more advanced technical skills, and its automation is limited by the possibilities of the technology itself.¹⁷⁰ Therefore the entire process of adding a new video is quite slow and does not show an immediate result in terms of audience participation.

¹⁶⁹ See for example this video showing excerpts from Halles interactive films, which clearly show audience active participation and collective experience: 'Przyczyna i skutek. Cause and Effect', [online video], 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcZ2i0gDbrs> (accessed 29 April 2014).

¹⁷⁰ Dr. Max Schleser, interviewed by Michaela Rábová, 15 May 2014, Copenhagen.

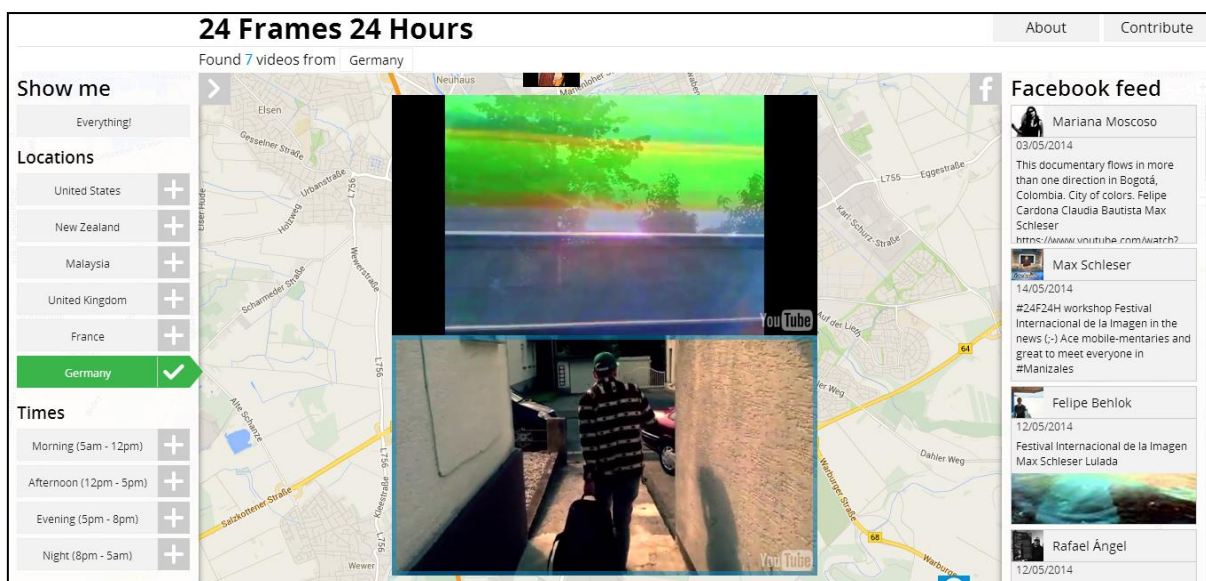


Figure 5: Snapshot from 24 Frames 24 Hours showing new features of the website, <http://www.24frames24hours.org.nz/#> (accessed 22 May 2014).

Another change which will help other users to navigate through the videos and combine them is the additional category concerning the format of the video – landscape, portrait or square. As it has been touched upon in the previous subchapters, it was quite difficult to combine videos with various formats, adding that the different formats were not marked in the database. If the newly uploaded videos are going to be classified or marked according to the format they use, it will extend the number of combinations. It will also give more freedom of ways in which to combine the videos – not only in a vertical orientation (one next to each other) but also horizontally (one under the other).

The third added icon is the grey ‘f’, which shows the activity happening on the Facebook wall of 24 Frames 24 Hours group. This has definitely added more ‘life’ to the website in terms of social interaction, but there is still no space for direct exchange of opinions and information on particular videos or topics connected to them. Hence, the Facebook feed serves more as an information panel for the website visitors to update them about the latest activities within the project. The website ‘producer’ still cannot contribute directly to such a discussion forum, unless he or she is a member of the Facebook group and has a Facebook account. The contribution to the discussion can thus be done only through Facebook, which will then be displayed in the Facebook panel on the project’s website.

This quite significant change has proved that the 24 Frames 24 Hours hypervideo is something distinguishable from conventional cinema because of its variable features which are typical for new media objects as Lev Manovich described.¹⁷¹ The hypervideo will not stop changing as the ‘producers’ add new videos and create new collages. This is something new

¹⁷¹ Manovich, 2001, p. 56.

compared to traditional cinema, where once the film is finished and distributed, its content and rendition do not change. It can be interpreted differently in different contexts and circumstances, but the audience cannot contribute to the content through their own creative action.

Such variability is partly due to the participatory possibilities of the Web 2.0 which gives more space for content creation by various users, partly by the direct interaction of the ‘producers’ that interact with the material, and in this particular case, they can not only compose new collages, but they can also add new videos that are personally meaningful to them. This last point is very essential for participation of the audience/‘producers’, because an activity of creating something which is personally meaningful leads to personal engagement and therefore to participation within the topic, as David Gauntlett argues.¹⁷²

Hence, the website now allows direct participation of the audience, which confirms my previous argument that the website was not interactive enough and did not encourage audience participation within the project. This proves that even Max Schleser as the organizer of the project found the website dissatisfactory compared to the current participatory possibilities of Web 2.0. The audience can now be inspired and contribute directly with their personal representation of their local environment on a global level regardless if they have or have not participated in the workshops. Nevertheless, it is important to state that there is still a gap in terms of communication among ‘producers’. A discussion forum or some sort of system for comments would definitely engage more users because everyone is interested in hearing feedback on their fruits of creativity. As David Gauntlett noticed, people wish to connect and share their opinions and to become an active participant in dialogues and communities.¹⁷³ By being able to communicate and share tips, stories, and experience, the hypervideo ‘producers’ would actually create their own global community, which would contribute to audience participation on the global level.

There is another issue that arises with such direct participation of the audience. If the individual viewer/‘producer’ becomes inspired and decides to contribute directly to the hypervideo by his or her own short film, it will actually discourage his participation on the local level, i.e. disinterest in taking part in the workshops which implies participation through collective action. This is an aspect which Max Schleser finds problematic, because he thinks that the hypervideo should still include this ‘social’ element, whether through an online communication or through workshops.¹⁷⁴ This points back to the fact that an online forum or a space for comments could offer one of the solutions, allowing the ‘producers’ to interact ‘socially’ online.

¹⁷² Gauntlett, 2011, p. 2.

¹⁷³ Gauntlett, 2011, p. 222.

¹⁷⁴ Dr. Max Schleser, interviewed by Michaela Rábová, 15 May 2014, Copenhagen.

The last comment on the project concerns a workshop that took place in Bogota, Columbia in the beginning of May. Some of the videos are already uploaded in the Facebook group but not in the project's website. Once they are part of the hypervideo, the spectrum of the covered and represented areas will broaden, which will add more credibility to the argument that Schleser's aim was to create a *global* [highlighted by the author] city film,¹⁷⁵ i.e. covering various areas around the world.

This chapter has discussed the case study of *24 Frames 24 Hours* from the perspective of the other side of the project – from the participation of the audience, i.e. people who have not participated in the creation of the individual videos. The two approaches to the project's 'visual product' called by the organizer "hypervideo" have shown that *24 Frames 24 Hours* did not bring anything too innovative in terms of audience participation compared to other new media objects and examples from the history of cinema. This was due to the limitations of the website which had not allowed any collective 'global' experience of the audience and no interaction among the members of the online audience. They had been assigned the role of an individual viewer who could still express her or his creativity by creating various collages and choosing which music to listen to out of the offered soundtracks. This argument has been proven to be right, since even the authors of the website have reconsidered its 'interactivity' and added the possibility of direct audience participation through adding one's own video. The variability of the hypervideo has proven to be the innovative characteristic of the new media objects as compared to conventional cinema.

¹⁷⁵ M. Schleser, '24 Frames 24 Hours', [online video], <http://vimeo.com/27426247> (accessed 14 May 2014).

Conclusion

Mobile filmmaking is a relatively new and quickly evolving area within the field of motion pictures. Thanks to its easy accessibility in terms of price, skills and ubiquity, mobile filmmaking has great potential to increase people's participation in their environment, especially where they might feel to have lost their 'voice' because of numerous social, political and cultural changes during the past years. Mobile filmmakers, by whom I mean basically anyone possessing and using the camera phone, have the possibility to *share*, and to share directly due to Internet access available on most mobile phones. Internet access enables mobile filmmakers to actively engage with their environment. By picking up the phone, and trying to convey a message to someone else, mobile filmmakers have to focus their creativity and attention on what they see and experience around them, i.e. they *participate* in their environment. In that sense, mobile filmmaking can become an alternative to mainstream media such as TV, newspapers and radio, because it can serve as a 'voice' of individuals and communities. In addition to this, mobile films can be extremely personal because they are created directly by the mobile phone users. Mobile filmmaking can thus increase individual's and community's interest in the events happening around them.

Mobile filmmaking is distinguishable from traditional filmmaking because of its participatory feature. Using the example of the project *24 Frames 24 Hours*, which has been running since 2011 and involves participants from several continents, this thesis has explored two main areas: how mobile filmmaking is used as a participatory and creative medium to increase individuals' and groups' active participation in their social and physical environment, and whether it possesses a potential for increasing audience engagement through virtual interaction.

The above analysis has shown that mobile filmmaking can be perceived from two perspectives regarding its participatory character. It can be seen as a *process*, where mobile films are created by mobile users, and it can be looked upon as a *product*, which is presented to the audience who can then interact with it in different ways. The analysis of *24 Frames 24 Hours* has shown that if mobile filmmaking is used as a *process*, i.e. a tool or an activity to create or mediate one's message, it increases one's participation within one's physical environment, particularly in public spaces. It also allows individuals to express and explore their creativity when filming with their mobile phones, and engage with their environment. Furthermore, mobile filmmaking increases the involvement of an individual in his/her social environment. Such social involvement is a result of the filmmakers' engagement in their surroundings, and their interaction with other mobile filmmakers. By interacting with others and by contributing with their own mobile films to online platforms, mobile phone users and filmmakers create new communities.

Thanks to the direct Internet access provided by the current phones and thanks to the participatory character of the Web 2.0, the scale of participation via mobile filmmaking extends beyond the local environment and permits the mobile filmmaker to participate in the world also on a global scale.

This brings us to the second perspective I used to analyse mobile filmmaking, i.e. to see it as a *product*. A product in this case was the *24 Frames 24 Hours*' online platform, where the individual videos from the workshops were uploaded, and which Max Schleser called "hypervideo". The analysis has shown that mobile filmmaking does not offer anything new in terms of audience participation, especially when compared with some examples from cinema history. However, what is new about mobile filmmaking as a *product* is the way it is presented, which in the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours* is the database-like structure of the hypervideo. This structure allows the viewer to create new collages and new narratives out of the uploaded videos. Nevertheless, how much can audience interact with the content, express their creativity and participate within the virtual community, depends largely on the extent of the website's interactivity, which is determined by the interface but also by the actual person designing the website. In the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, the project's website has proven to be less interactive than a few other similar new media documentary projects, and does not encourage much audience participation. It lacks space for virtual interaction, i.e. a discussion forum or a system of commenting. Therefore, I would conclude that allowing the audience to interact with each other, whether physically in a form of a collective screening or virtually through an online discussion, could encourage and increase audience participation in mobile filmmaking as a *product*.

Another inference concerning the innovativeness of mobile filmmaking as a product concerns its form. Mobile filmmaking as a *product* has proven to be highly variable, continually changing and evolving. In the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, it is not only the new combinations of the individual videos that make the form of the hypervideo variable, but it is also the way technology changes which opens up new possibilities for audience participation. Moreover, the hypervideo's variability is also a result of the decision of the project organizer to open up the hypervideo to anyone, i.e. to let anyone contribute their own films without having any social interaction with the rest of the project participants. Such variability is something new compared to conventional filmmaking, where once a film is finished and distributed, it can rarely ever change in terms of form and content. However, in the case of *24 Frames 24 Hours*, the spectator can interact with the individual videos, create new collages, get inspired, and at this stage even contribute their own new videos. When the spectator adds new short films, the product changes again, because it has new elements in its mosaic of visual objects. This interaction thus answers

the question of how mobile filmmaking, as a new means of communication, encourages creative engagement between the mobile filmmaker and the audience. We can perceive it as a spiral: the user being mobile filmmaker might inspire the audience to create their own mobile film, then the audience might become the active filmmaker and inspire the previous filmmaker, who is now a spectator, to make something new. This scenario can be potentially repeated an infinite number of times.

Last but not least, the research uncovered several possibilities to ‘improve’ the project *24 Frames 24 Hours* in terms of audience participation. Therefore the thesis has open up new possibilities for further research which might be discussed with the project organizer Max Schleser.

In conclusion, I believe that placing mobile filmmaking within the context of modern storytelling can open up new possibilities for further research. Mobile filmmaking can develop a universal ‘visual’ language which might connect filmmakers and spectators all over the world. Although every mobile film is unique to its narrator, this universal language could make these unique films accessible and understandable to all.

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